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OLIVER'S SECRETARY

John Milton in an Era of Revolt

True poets are the object of my reverence and my love, and the constant source of my delight. I know that the most of them . . . have been the strenuous enemies of despotism.

From *The Second Defence of the Commonwealth*,
Translation by ROBERT FELLOWES, A.M. Oxon.





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JOHN MILTON

From the Portrait by William Dobson, Friend of Van Dyke and, at one time,
Serjeant Painter to Charles I

OLIVER'S SECRETARY

*John Milton in an
Era of Revolt*

BY

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To My Brother

ROBERT T. NEILL

in Gratitude and Affection



PREFACE

My interest in Milton as a political theorist was first aroused by the lectures of Professor William Archibald Dunning in a course studied under his guidance at Columbia University. The writing of a subsequent monograph on the political career of Lord Byron induced an eagerness, when that was completed, to revert to the earlier and greater poet for a consideration of that part he played in the political development of his time and of the effect on his life of those political events in which he was concerned.

In 1923, the Fellowship Committee of the American Association of University Women renewed the grant of the Alice Freeman Palmer Memorial Fellowship, then held by me, in the hope that the project might be carried out with such assistance. The postponing of the completion of my study until the present date has been due to duress of academic duties incident to undertaking teaching. Many vacation periods have been pleasantly spent in research, and lapse of time, it may be hoped, has resulted in a more mature conception than would have otherwise been possible.

It is pleasant to have this opportunity of thanking President Meta Glass of Sweet Briar College for having permitted the half year's absence which made possible research in England. I am extremely grateful to the MacDowell Association and, particularly, to Mrs. Edward MacDowell for the privilege of working for three summers under ideal conditions as a member of the Colony at Peterborough.

So many bibliographies of Milton already have been published that I excuse myself from adding one to this volume. References at its close give titles of tracts and newsbooks. The Thom-

ason collection, the greatest warehouse for contemporary material on the period from 1641 to 1660, and David Masson's seven volume biography are the two sources from which I have derived the most constant support. Of the modern interpretations of Milton's character, I prefer that of Sir Walter Raleigh. Undoubtedly, this has influenced me. To mention all the writers to whom I owe assistance would be to render courtesy to them but to be tedious to my reader.

I wish to acknowledge indebtedness in my research to the wise and benevolent assistance of Falconer Madan, formerly Bodley's Librarian, Oxford, and to the kindly suggestions of Mr. R. Flower of the Manuscript Division of the British Museum. The debts in my own country are heavy. I thank Mr. George Parker Winship for assistance in using the exceptional collection of Milton treasures and English newsbooks and broadsides in the fortunate possession of Harvard. To Professor R. H. Griffith, Curator of the Wrenn Library of the University of Texas, I desire to express appreciation for his listing of those many valuable items in the Wrenn and Aiken Collections which have been illuminating. This aid was succeeded by further kindness during the too brief period that I was able to spend in Austin, making the debt to my former instructor altogether a heavy one. I wish to express my thanks, also, for the privilege of studying the files of *Mercurius Politicus* in the John Pierpont Morgan Library and making use of other rare volumes there. In the William H. Humiston Collection of the MacDowell Association, there was found material on those musicians whose lives touched Milton's. The burden of proof reading has been lightened by the friendly assistance of Professor James Taft Hatfield of Northwestern University.

My greatest debt is due my son, without whose forbearance and encouragement the work could not have been completed.

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INTRODUCTION

MILTON has been written of as a poet, as a Latinist, as an historian and as a pamphleteer. Perhaps of all his biographies, none has been more successful than the brief life by zestful Aubrey. And John Aubrey was Milton's contemporary and driven by stress of duties to write "tumultarily." Why add another? The years that have been devoted to the present book have been expended in the hope that its pages might present to readers of today, the Milton that contended in the seventeenth century, not only as an "acrid, burning visionary," but as a man of affairs.

He was a Milton Agonistes, one whose example is deeply worthy of study and emulation. His theory of sovereignty, his opinion of democracy, his condemnation of a state-established church, his approval of polygamy, none of these need be seconded in 1932. What is important is that in the twentieth century we should, ourselves, think of these matters and, having formed convictions, uphold them valiantly. The problems of Milton's age are still unsolved, and to past difficulties we have added present confusion. Milton foresaw something of the danger that would come from surfeit of production. He did not foresee the irony of starvation and unemployment in a glutted world. His conception of hell would have no terror for many in our bread lines. Milton's goal we have forsaken. Few strive for reasoned liberty in church and state and home. Reason implies thought and thought is a commodity the machines cannot manufacture. They can only create in stupendous measure those conditions which demand it. The machines have given us time, and this we might have used for thinking. We have fed it to yet other machines that we have manufactured to afford us with amusement.

How many mistakes Milton made one can understand only from a close study of his life. And only from such a study can one comprehend how constant was his struggle against despotism of every form, but, above all, the despotism that is self-imposed by greed and sloth and lechery. The glory of Milton's maturity is implicit in his youth. *That* we must study, for self-priesthood is not a bauble to be made in a morning's sunshine nor does it descend upon the needy after a night of tears and prayer.

Milton taught the universality of priesthood. Himself, he dedicated to leadership, but each, he thought, might be his own high priest, might purify and sanctify. If misfortunes of the state could not be averted, they could be borne with fortitude and honesty. Such teaching is a gracious doctrine and the more worthy to be received when poets prove recreant to the province that is rightly theirs. Or when they lie in death after a cruel war. Neither prosperity nor misfortune can take from man divinity, but the senses may become so blunted that man may count himself a beast:

The great Maker of the Universe, when he had framed all else fleeting and subject to decay, did mingle with man, in addition to that of him which is mortal, a certain divine breath, and as it were, part of Himself, immortal, indestructible, free from death and all hurt; which after it had sojourned purely and holily for some time in the earth, as a heavenly visitant, should flutter upwards to its native heaven, and return to its proper place and country.

The study of Milton should make more perceptible the divinity that is in ourselves. We can look at him squarely. It is not necessary to bow so low before his genius that we cannot see his face, nor should we make a genuflexion so extreme that in mock reverence we may study the buckles of his shoes or other trivia that might delight the gossips. Through force of wishing to speak to posterity, he evolved a mighty eloquence. We have only to wish to hear.

PART I

TRAINING

I call, therefore, a complete and generous education, that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of Peace and War. And how all this may be done between twelve and one and twenty, in less time than is now bestowed in pure trifling at grammar and sophistry, is to be thus ordered.

Of Education.

OLIVER'S SECRETARY

CHAPTER I

"PIGEONS OF ST. PAUL'S"

WHAT education the child, John Milton, received from city streets was good. From dawn until slow-swinging Bow Bell and its younger brothers pealed the curfew, there was such pageantry of sound and symphony of movement as the market streets of bustling London could provide.¹ At six the rhythmic arbiter of the day rang out the summons that sent apprentices scurrying to their work in Cheapside. The little boy, who watched them from the lintel of his father's shop in Bread Street, was of their brotherhood. He was beginning, all unconsciously, that long apprenticeship to life which men must serve who would be poets.

In the sixth year of King James's reign, he had been born on the day of Venus in cold December under the Sign of the Spread Eagle. The eagle was argent, legg'd and beaked in sable—an aspiring symbol that with its scorpion-like tail and prominent talons served to distinguish to an unlettered populace the shop of a successful scrivener. Here deeds and wills were drawn and legal stationery published. To the elder John Milton, the swinging sign had associations as the heraldic figure of his coat of arms. Sometimes it suggested, in its ruffling aggressiveness, the father, who had disinherited him,—Richard Milton,² yeoman of Oxfordshire, Romanist, who would neither attend his parish church nor pay the fines levied against him for recusancy. He had no dealings with a son who had brought an English Bible with him to

London and consorted there with Puritans. In young John, the spread eagle evoked wonder and mystery and something of fear of the unknown. His father had, also, a gold medal and chain, the gift of a Polish prince, who had bestowed it in gratitude for musicianship in composing an *In Nomine*, of forty parts. The child must have had pleasure in fingering the pretty baubles, but the eagle was to prove the stronger influence.

His mother, the excellent Sarah,⁸ was more interested in people than in music or in books. Her charities were liberal, and there was need of them. The Roman wall around the city clipped close its area so that the poor were crowded in narrow, wooden tenements with overhanging stories that made dark the streets beneath. These were unpaved and filthy through lack of sewers,—such streets as the plague delighted to play macabre pranks in. Had young John taken some part in his mother's work, he might have gained a simple understanding of humanity and of life's problems, which would have given him that tolerance and appreciation, which, later, he was to need.

But the pageantry of London, John Milton loved. On gala days Bow Bells were rung at the City's pleasure. It was not a breathless run with little Anne and brother Christopher to Cheapside where the great processions passed. And always there was much to see even without budging from the doorstep: lurching coaches drew up to unload their passengers at nearby inns, roisterers went swinging by, arm in arm, to enter the Mermaid Tavern, dour-faced prisoners were led through the heavy doors of Bread Street compter. Young Milton hearkened to the cracking whips of the carriers and the whistle of the carters. He beat time to the cries of the ginger-bread makers and fruit vendors, the catches of the tinkers and the laments of the beggars. And he heard the songs of the ballad makers, who sang the wares that they would sell. His foster nurse, the City, crooned and teased him with a rhythm surer and truer than the harmonies his father labored on within four walls by candle

light. Did he puzzle the riddle of existence? His foster nurse provided the puppet shows and little operas of Bartholomew Fair. There he might see a mimic sun rise on the first day and angels crowd the scene and sheathe with wings the ingenious machines that aided in their descent. Young Milton watched these things and pondered.

The constant care and training his father lavished on him made him, beyond his years, reflective. This father had been a pale Elizabethan; had hymned the beauty and prudence of the aged Virgin Queen. He was middle aged now and provided some of the dolorous compositions of Sir William Leighton's *Tears of Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soul*, psalms that found their way into the Ravenscroft collection, and more lightsome melodies for the *Tristitiae Remedium*.⁴ His Oxford training and the common sense he had inherited from yeoman ancestry stood him in good stead. He amassed property and could afford to plan an ambitious future for the son who bore his name. For the younger John, there was to be only the highest,—not contentment with a scrivener's shop and with motets and madrigals for leisure hours.⁵ The father taught the little hands to play upon the organ. Of his tutors in the humanities—and there were several—the child's favorite was Thomas Young, a Scottish Puritan, much interested in politics. Later, Young was an exile in Hamburg. Later, still, he was honored as Master of Jesus College, Cambridge. Milton's praise of him is so stiffened with classical allusions as to give assurance of the master's erudition.

When the lad was nine, his portrait was painted by Cornelius Janssen, but lately come to England and who was to paint, also, King James and his ill-fated children. The portrait shows a prim, pretty face, rising above a ruff. The dress was elegant. The cut of the hair was puritanic like Thomas Young's. Milton's delicate features seem to accord the better with the ruff. The smooth face is that of a child that is loved and who deserves love.⁶

At ten, his brother Christopher claims that John was a poet. His parents, in fancy, already saw him consecrated to the ministry,—a subtle vengeance on the grandfather for the disinheritance of the elder John. In Milton's twelfth year, it was decided to send him with Christopher to the public school of St. Paul's, where, although continuing still the tutoring in the home, his education might progress more rapidly. And so, very early, the future poet and pamphleteer of revolt became a part of that fourth of London's population that was connected with the Church. St. Paul's, itself, was a scant five minutes' walk from Bread Street,—a Gothic structure, the largest cathedral then in England. Of its three towers, two were used as prisons. Beneath the central tower and leading to the altar, there stretched the famous, or infamous, Duke Humphrey's Walk. There hucksters traded, pedlars called their wares and courtiers gossiped and arranged for assassinations. Notices and advertisements profaned the pillars, but left clear the tomb of Sir John Beauchamp, whose effigy presided over the noisy place. A more mundane spot did not exist in all of London.

It may be assumed that young Milton did not find this Bedlam to his liking. Perhaps his respect for the Church was diminished by the hospitality it extended to the avaricious and the lascivious. But the churchyard with its ancient graves and outdoor pulpit, he had to pass through every day, and there, too, life could be studied with advantage. It was surrounded with booksellers' shops and crowded with stalls for the sale of ballads,—a trumpery form of verse so much despised that the fastidious claimed its polluting presence, more than the ribaldry of Duke Humphrey's Walk, accounted for the vengeful lightning that so often struck St. Paul's.

Nearby was the Bishop's Palace and adjoining this a small enclosure, rimmed with a cloister, where one could walk, and study on the walls a grim presentment of antic Popes and kings and scullery maids, cavorting in a Dance of Death.



From the Original in the Collection of J. Pierpont Morgan

MILTON IN HIS TENTH YEAR

From the Miniature by Cornelius Janssen, the Flemish Artist, who Painted the
Children of James I

Over it all flew the pigeons, sweeping upward, fluttering down, catching the sunlight on their eager wings and alighting to strut importantly in search of food. One could not visualize St. Paul's without these pigeons and so it came about that the children, who went in and out of the Cathedral school, were called, also, the "Pigeons of St. Paul's." The school was maintained by the Worshipful Company of Mercers for the education of the sons of merchants who were well to do. On every window was painted the legend, "*Aut doce, aut disce, aut discede.*" Of the one hundred and fifty "pigeons," who sat beneath the windows, none so little needed the admonition as John Milton. He found very simple the introductory Latin books that John Colet and Erasmus had written for the school. But in the more advanced classics and in philosophy, there was stout pabulum.

John Aubrey, best and briefest of Milton's biographers,⁷ records that "when he went to school, he studied very hard and sat up very late, commonly till twelve or one o'clock at night; and his father ordered the maid to sit up for him." It was regrettable that, while he was learning so much, he was permitted to disregard so completely his own health and the comfort of a woman who was his inferior. The headmaster of the school, Dr. Gill, was a disciplinarian and enforced with a rod the motto of the school's adoption. He was a famous Latinist and taught well the collections of Latin psalms that in the school were used as texts. His son, Alexander, was a classicist, also, and a poet. He had been educated at Trinity College, Oxford, and served now as usher and tutor.

It was he who set the daily tasks for John Milton,—tasks small in themselves, but fulfilling, in part, the function of the leaden traceries that in the great rose window of St. Paul's conditioned design of line and color of cathedral glass and even determined the slant of light that should fall, in unregarded beauty, upon Duke Humphrey's Walk.

If the pattern of Milton's life was to be wholly English, it

was to take much of its color from Italy. No other of his school fellows won from him the affection he bestowed on the young Italian, Charles Diodati, son of the physician who attended the two eldest children of King James. Diodati was as fond of sunlight and laughter as Milton was of reverie and candlelight. His family had migrated from Lucca to Geneva on account of their Protestantism, and thence had come to London. He was older than Milton and, by 1622, was ready to leave St. Paul's and enter Trinity, the College Alexander Gill had attended at Oxford. There Milton might have followed him, had not the elder John regarded Oxford as dangerously tainted with Romanism. Fortunately, their friendship survived the separation.

Of the tangible results of Milton's school days, there remain only the metrical paraphrases of the One hundred and fourteenth and One hundred and thirty-sixth psalms. They are imbued with that illusive quality of mystic simplicity that emanates from youth when it has in it the promise of future greatness.

He was beginning his poet's life with a gladsome paraphrase of the songs of David. He was to end it with an autobiographic interpretation of the sufferings of Samson.

CHAPTER II

"THE LADY OF CHRIST'S"

ON February 12, 1625, there was recorded in the register of Christ's College, Cambridge, the fact that John Milton of London, son of John Milton, was that day enrolled as a minor pensioner under William Chappell. There were about two hundred and fifty members of the community at Christ's, housed according to their rank, from the Master, who had his own garden, to the first year students, who were domiciled three or four to a ground floor or an attic chamber. Not until Milton's latter years at the College, could he have been privileged to enjoy the pleasant first floor quarters that tradition has assigned to him.¹

The students rose at five in the morning and occupied themselves with religious exercises and lectures until seven, when breakfast was served in their rooms. There were more lectures and debates until noon, then they dined in the college dining-hall, sitting upright on benches, without backs. After that, their time was their own until the evening service.

In the afternoon, there were bear-fighting, and bowling and boxing for the lusty, and sports on the River Cam. There was drinking, and smoking of the Virginia tobacco that King James abhorred. Those who wished to ride or drive took "Hobson's choice" and went their several ways. For old Hobson, the College carrier, saw to it that his forty horses were used in strict rotation. Occasionally the College produced a play. At some time during the course of his seven years at Cambridge, Milton became proficient at sword-practice, but this was his only recorded exercise.

At nine or ten in the evening, according to the season, the students were required to have retired to their rooms.

The curriculum of Christ's, which in Milton's expectations was to provide the most important part of the life there, consisted of the Trivium (grammar, logic and rhetoric) and the Quadrivium (arithmetic, astronomy, geometry and music), scholastic impedimenta bequeathed by the Middle Ages,—mortmain of Church and past. There were offered, also, theology and philosophy proper. Since the majority of the students were preparing for the ministry, it is certain that Laud, then Bishop of London, extended his supervision even to Christ's inner court and gardens. Certainly, the Arminianism he favored found a resonant echo in the majority of the lecture rooms. The governance of the College was under the Master, Dr. Thomas Bainbrigge, who was severe with the students and servile toward his superiors. Milton's tutor, William Chappell, was, through his fortunate adherence to Laudian doctrine and practice, already in line for the bishopric he enjoyed some time thereafter. The effort to crystallize the turbulent waters of the Reformation into set forms of pseudo-Roman pattern was a task which had no well-wishers in the little group of Puritans who gathered at the musical evenings of Milton's father. For his religious beliefs, the elder John had suffered disinheritance from a Roman Catholic father. Milton's former tutor, Thomas Young, had become an exile because he could not conform to Anglicanism. The family of Milton's friend, Charles Diodati, were expatriates from Italy for their Protestantism.

Soon after Milton's matriculation, he attended the commemorative services of the University on the day of the funeral of King James at Windsor. The students speculated as to whether the bishops would wax lordlier under Charles or whether his beautiful French wife would send them packing or subtly convert them and the King to her own faith. Milton's father believed that salvation lay in the purification of the Church from within and was eager for Milton to dedicate himself to such service.

As yet, the youth, himself, had scarce felt the heavy hand of religious oppression. The sixteen-year-old student was now bidden to write oratorical exercises proving that "in the destruction of anything whatsoever there is no resolution into first matter," or that "there is no partial form in an animal in addition to the total." Milton was forming brave friendships in the library. He objected to being dragged from his studies for the composing of "frivolous declamations." In divers ways, he was able to take revenge. Permission was given him to write against the scholastic philosophy and so he had opportunity to inveigh against the subtle trivialities that blunted his eyes and mind and accumulated into work as endless as "the cleansing of the Augean cow houses." That matter he was forced to read was "nerveless, languid and earthy" and could be resolved only into a "litigious battling of discording opinions."

The protests of undergraduates are not infrequent. Usually they are distinguished neither by their literary style nor by the remedies the malcontents would offer for abuses. Milton did not whine. He denounced the shameful waste of his time and he set forth a program that must have been very alarming to his cloistered tutors: "By these two things chiefly I perceive a country to be advanced and adorned—noble speaking and brave action." The academic quibbling he was forced to undertake contributed to neither. He advised travel, observation, investigation of the heavens:

Follow the wandering sun as his companion, and call time itself to a reckoning and demand an account of its eternal march. . . . Know thyself, and at the same time those holy minds and intelligences with whom hereafter one is to enter into everlasting companionship.

The Reverend William Chappell could write a treatise on *The Whole Duty of Man*, but he could not cope with such a student as this. He whipped John Milton, not publicly, but, it

may be surmised, he whipped him very thoroughly.² It followed that in the spring of 1626, Milton was rusticated, and returned with a right good will to the shelter of his father's roof. In London, he obeyed the injunction of his friend Diodati,—sent in a Latin epistle, as befitted an Oxford student, but fervid with youth and affection: he lived, laughed and enjoyed his youth. He assured his friend that he spent no time in regretting the reedy Cam or his forbidden rooms at Christ's. He was free of the harsh threats of his Master and of other things not to be submitted to by genius. He enjoyed the pompous tragedies and gay comedies of the London stage and recounted such diverse plots to Diodati as show him to have been a constant attendant. He admired the towers of London and the beauties within her gates. With what a prodigality of youthful superlatives and classical allusions, he celebrates their charms! To linger in London were to love and to remain forever. Milton told Diodati that it had been determined he should again suffer himself to be immured at Cambridge.

On his return, a transfer was made to mutual content and the young Londoner was put under the guidance of Richard Tovey. But the system of education could not be so easily adjusted and Milton continued to learn to hate and to express his hatred. As a warning to those who, like Chappell, veered toward Catholicism, it pleased Milton to infuse into the customary poems and epigrams on Guy Fawkes' Day such bitterness against Pope and prelacy as to deter the gentle Cowper from including them in his translations of Milton's Latin poems. When asked to indite Latin iambics on the Platonic Idea as Aristotle understood it, this disconcerting student produced such absurdities as to qualify his opus for inclusion in a burlesque book of 1715, made up of specimens of unintelligible metaphysics. Sometimes the lad appealed pathetically to the muses to deliver him from his ungrateful tasks. Sometimes he prefaced the brief matter of his disquisitions with lengthy introductions on subjects better to his liking,—the decline

and fall of the Roman Empire or the events of high Olympus. He treated bewildering subjects in a manner purposely bewildering. He acknowledged that, whether or not he seemed so to his reader, to himself he was a great bore. At times he concluded his conscious imbecilities with acclamations of the invincibility of truth, which was so shamefully obscured by the vain foam of words of schoolmen and their suffering pupils.

When he spoke on art as being more conducive to human happiness than ignorance, he informed his audience that what passed for logic and what the peripatetics called metaphysics produced a diet of thistles and thorns on which finches, not men, could live. Were those studies which were profitless sheared from the curriculum, whole years could be saved and shipwreck and pestilence evaded. Nor did his estimate of Cambridge logic and metaphysics vary with the passing years. When he wrote, in 1644, *Of Education*, he described these studies contemptuously again,—“sow thistles and brambles,” and he expressed his pity for the unballasted wits of poor youths, who were so early tossed and turmoiled in the fathomless and unquiet deeps of controversy.

Throughout his seven college years, he was set to the writing of obituaries on bishops and other notabilities, and mimicked with tantalizing exaggeration the fashions of his college. Storms of passion heaved his boiling bosom on the death of the Bishop of Ely, his eyes were made tumid with briny tears, or so he tells us, but his deft fancy remained alert and ingeniously decked out these lamentations for Anglican worthies with amorous descriptions of a whole troop of pagan deities that mingled in confraternity with the hierarchy of the Christian heaven. Thus early, Milton began his unorthodox conjunction of the gods of past and present. He felt their brotherhood. And if men are brothers and can recognize as deity no more than what they can themselves conceive, surely the gods must have close kinship also.

Milton solemnized the death of the Vice Chancellor of Cam-

bridge and that of the University beadle, even the College carrier, honest Hobson, was accorded obituaries. Those on the carrier were more sincere under their jesting exterior than were the fulsome eulogies on bishops. So much did death become the occasion for the writing of poetical exercises that Milton continued to avail himself of such opportunities for versifying, even when he was absent from Cambridge on vacation. The passing of his own niece drew from him an inappropriate and metaphysical conceit that shows him to have read too often and too unwisely the poems of Dr. Donne, in manuscript circulation then at Cambridge. Real grief, his lamentation does not show.

The erudition, masterful use of Latin and frequent beauty of his verse soon came to be recognized, but not so much by others as by the poet himself. For Milton felt his future greatness while others saw only its promise. He was slight and delicately formed. He had soft hands and curling love locks. He did not drink, and his sleep was not the abandoned, noisy sleep that comes from drinking. Where others vaunted their amours, Milton boasted of his virginity. By an overfondling adulation, he brushed the dew from that chastity, the rare freshness of which might otherwise have been admired. For silence in a Galahad, it has been remarked, is as appropriate as in a Launcelot. *Domina*, the students called him, "the Lady of Christ's."

His ladyhood did not prevent him from using coarse language to berate the grossness and enmity that he found arrayed against him in abundance. Some of his expressions may have been derived from his reading of Petronius Arbiter, some from his acquaintance with the works of Henry VIII's "Vicar of Hell." But his own genius was usually sufficient to supply invectives. With sword and tongue and pen, John Milton won respect. Only in solitude could he attain content.

In his fourth year at Cambridge when he had become a sophister, he was privileged to speak in the public schools. There he declaimed on "the excellency of day over night." He told his

audience that for almost so many heads as he beheld, he saw visages that bore malice toward him, men lacking in right reason and sound judgment, as bare of wisdom as his nail, who when stripped of their pretentious nothingness must needs draw in their horns and creep away like certain little animals. Assuredly, the discourse might have frightened an audience into silence, but the silence could not have been of consent.

Why such a student should have been appointed Master of the Routs remains inexplicable. He, himself, is somewhat apologetic for having accepted the rôle assigned him at the college exercises, but his hours' long oration in Latin and English shows that he seriously endeavored to qualify for his part and that he had mightily resolved his audience should be merry. Those who refrained from laughter, he declared, did so because they had bad teeth or feared to vomit forth their half-gorged dinners. He would have whipped his audience into mirth. If such a flagellating invitation was not effective, it is to be feared the substance of the discourse was even less so. Copious obscenities on the subject of his fatherhood of the Rout, references to the hostility he had formerly experienced and to the worthier work from which he was reluctantly detained, an irrelevant address to the rivers of England, all these banished conclusively the soul of that wit that the occasion demanded. John Aubrey says that Milton performed his exercises at Cambridge with very good applause, but Aubrey's account is based on what he learned from Milton himself or from Christopher. If such an oration were applauded, the students of that day were more generous than are those of the present.

The gods took revenge on young John Milton. Cupid made a jest of him and withered his smashing oratory to whimpering, amorous sighs. In the pleasant month of May of 1628, Milton experienced first love. The unknown lady was, of course, a Venus incarnate and her lover esteemed himself the only one who had ever loved and lost without even having become known

to his innamorata. A Latin epistle confessed to Diodati that its author was sweetly miserable, suffering intensely and yet unwilling to forego his pains. His condition was eminently satisfactory. Realities at this time could not have sustained him. It was budding time and Milton's heart was beginning to function as something more than a motor for the transfusion of his blood.

He had already seen, but not remarked, the girl whom later he was to make his wife.³ The souvenir, now a year old, that he had brought from her home in Oxfordshire was a note, acknowledging a debt for £500, signed by her father. There had to be for Milton the stuff that dreams are made on and the fleeting vision of a beautiful woman could evoke poetic longings that the raw charms of Mary Powell, as glimpsed on a visit of business, could not have satisfied.

At the appropriate season, Milton teased his young manhood by inditing a poem, *On the Approach of Spring*,—not matter for the reading of Puritans. In it is derived such vicarious joy from describing the embraces of gods and goddesses that one senses that Milton, himself, was ripe for less celestial philanderings and becomes uneasily conscious of how persistent is youth's call.

Exquisite perception of the beauty life might hold made him even less patient with his surroundings. The students at Cambridge were not, it seemed, even able to create beauty in make-believe. It was the custom, when royal visitors came to the University, to include dramatic presentations in the entertainments. Twice during Milton's residence, Charles I so honored Cambridge, at one time bringing his Queen. In 1629, Christ's College assisted in entertaining Chateaufort, the French ambassador, and Lord Holland, who had succeeded the Duke of Buckingham as Chancellor of the University. The plays that were chosen for their delectation were comedies.

As a Londoner and devotee of Shakespeare, it might be expected that Milton would have proven critical. His later pamphlets afford proof that he was. It disgusted him to see the young

divines "writhing and unboning their clergy limbs to all the antic and dishonest gestures of Trinculoes, buffoons and bawds." They esteemed themselves gallant men. Milton thought them fools, irreverently prostituting their calling to gain the smiles of courtiers and their demoiselles, court ladies and their grooms. He laughed at them, not with them. He disliked and hissed their mispronunciations and their foul and ignominious acting of parts that hirelings would have shamed to play.⁴

He could not but contrast with these Cambridge clergy the rugged honesty of his former tutor, Alexander Gill. In the year Gill had aroused Milton's admiration by his sonorous verse in praise of Protestant victories abroad, Buckingham, the King's extravagant favorite, had been assassinated by Felton. Shortly afterwards, Gill had been taken from his school by two officers and carried to Westminster, there to be questioned by Laud, dread Bishop of London. Gill admitted the writing of a poem derogatory to Buckingham and statements as to the weakness of the King. He was incarcerated at Gate House and held so close a prisoner that none might visit him. The rooms of his friends at Oxford were searched and the Vice Chancellor of the University forwarded to the Council letters and other incriminating documents relative to the case. It was adjudged that Gill should be deprived of his degrees and degraded from the ministry, fined £2,000 and sentenced to lose his ears. Because he was a minister and because of his father's intercession, the fine was remitted and he escaped the corporal part of his punishment.⁵

These circumstances gave Milton a vivid opportunity of judging how circumspect must be the utterance of a member of the clergy, who was not in accord with the policy of the state. Milton wrote no elegy on Buckingham, though at the time of his assassination, the Duke was Chancellor of Cambridge.

In March of 1629, the young scholar came up for his bachelor's degree. With thirty others of Christ's, he subscribed to the oaths demanded, acknowledging the King's supremacy in things tem-

poral and spiritual, the righteousness of the Book of Common Prayer and the orthodoxy of the Thirty-nine Articles. The degree freed him from much of the work he had found onerous and without value. There was more time for private study in the library and for contemplation that would result in poetry. For his companions, he had Plato, Ovid, Sophocles, Virgil and Theocritus and, among his countrymen, Shakespeare, John Fletcher, and George Peele. Torquato Tasso and Giovanni de la Casa taught him to love the native language of his young friend Diodati. To his reading, he brought ability "to measure a just cadence and to scan without articulating." His taste, he avowed, was rather nice and humorous in what was tolerable than patient to read every drawling versifier.⁶

The distinction of his studies, and especially his Latinity, would assuredly have won a fellowship, had they been coupled with docility toward the rule of College and Church. As it was, men less worthy and younger in years were preferred above him. Of these, one was Edward King, whose qualities Charles I had personally commended. King's father was a knight and had been Secretary for Ireland. Milton's friendship for his rival remained undiminished after the advancement. A sense of security as to future greatness made tolerable for the poet such incidents. These were preparatory years. Only when his preceptors endeavored to cram them with nonsense did he protest. He wished leisure to determine how best he could live his life.

Most carefully, he weighed the motives and opportunities of those who exchanged cap and gown for the black dress of the clergy. Had he taken deacon's orders, he would have had to promise to obey reverently all those to whom his government and charge might be entrusted, to follow with glad mind their godly admonitions. Had he taken the oath of canonical obedience, he would have had to subscribe to a hundred and half a hundred more of those canons which to read were irksome. There were articles, too, prescribing the outward apparel of ecclesiasts,—

what gowns they should wear for their journeyings, the cut of their sleeves, when they might be permitted to wear a hat and when a cap.

Milton observed that those who took the oaths were often the simplest sons of fathers who feared that, without a living from the Church to fatten on, their fledglings might remain with gaping mouths. To the fastidious Milton, it seemed there were few candidates for Holy Orders who could speak or write in a pure style. The number seemed overwhelming of those, who by truancy and debauchery and the studying of nonsense, had become corrupted and unbalanced both in doctrine and in life. So many there were to fly off "unfeathered to theology" and stick and patch together with worn rags their mercenary sermons that Milton complained he had but few companions for his studies. He believed that, under the prelatical government of the Universities, learning had reached its lowest ebb. No, he would not subscribe and become a creature of Laud's, a minister to the state church.

If the University were careless of the education she gave to those who would be shepherds, Milton remarked that she gave no better preparation to those that she sent to courts of law. Justice and equity they did not know, for these were not taught them. Their thoughts were of fat fees and many of them. Those sent forth to undertake affairs of state had been schooled to a conscientious slavery. They believed that "flattery and court shifts and tyrannous aphorisms" were the highest points of wisdom. Prime youth was misspent, either in learning what was worthless or what was depraving. Milton did not envy the young graduates their fancied readiness to take part in affairs of the great world.⁷

But three oaths John Milton took while yet in cap and gown. He took them, not formally, but with deep reverence. They were to his country, his God and to his lady. He would be minister at large, minister to England. He would take such training as he himself saw necessary and that not under

the dominance of bishop or archbishop. He would be minister, not for the span of his life, but for all time. And such priesthood John Milton did not see as incompatible with love for woman. He wished to have such a love as Dante had for Beatrice, as Petrarch had for Laura. With pure heart and with pure body would he praise her. For Milton believed that he who carried a chaste and snow clean heart might hear, as had Pythagoras, the music of the ever-wheeling stars,⁸ might learn from them their harmony to give it to the earth. He took cognizance of the vows of knights, the chaste teachings of Plato and Xenophon and the injunctions of Holy Writ. He determined that unchastity in man, "the image and glory of God," was, even more than in woman, deflowering and dishonoring. "He who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter of laudable things ought, himself, to be a true poem."

The deep obligation of his three-fold dedication caused Milton to hold aloof, to consider "with a sacred reverence and religious advisement how best to undergo," not fearing to be late, if to be late meant to be able. He studied the parable of the talents, and found that those who had been latest had lost nothing when the Master of the vineyard allotted recompense.⁹

On his three and twentieth birthday, Milton cast into poetic form these sage reflections. The resultant sonnet and the splendid tribute to Shakespeare bespeak our patience with the inaction that sometimes Milton, himself, reviled. In Cambridge, he was trying his wings critically and timorously. Sometimes he attempted too great a flight and wisely gave it over, as in the case of his projected poem on "The Passion." As a birthday gift to Christ, he wrote on the Nativity, mingling pagan gods and Christian saints with Renaissance abandon. Such occupation with celestial themes caused Milton to rule from his Olympus the wine-god, who, to those who wrote on earthly matters, Milton acknowledged was a proven friend.

But for all his aspirations, the young poet could not live seven

years at Cambridge without being affected disadvantageously by the preceptors and regimen he found there. The prime desires of all mortals, he had come to believe, were to be useful—and to offend their enemies!¹⁰ The very vigor of his denunciation of the metaphysical quibbling of the schools hints that he had become tainted by methods he derided.

His academic course was closed with an oration that sought to prove that art, or knowledge, was more conducive to happiness than ignorance. This valedictory afforded final opportunity to fling his gauntlet at those who served the false gods of logic and metaphysics and, as a young knight who had completed his vigil, to challenge life to accord to him that rôle which he esteemed the highest:

To be the oracle of many nations; to have one's house a kind of temple; to be such as kings and commonwealths invite to come to them, such as neighbors and foreigners flock to visit, such as to have even once seen shall be boasted of by others as something meritorious.¹¹

Again young Milton took the requisite oaths so that he might obtain his degree. This time it was that of a master. He was twenty-three. His college years were over, but not apprenticeship.¹²

CHAPTER III

POET AND COURTIER

THERE followed a period of content. Milton's father was residing for longer and longer intervals at Horton in Buckinghamshire, though still with the aid of a partner keeping up his business of scrivener in London.¹ In the deeper peace of the rural village on the River Colne, Milton could develop and complete work he had begun in Cambridge, could summon back the images of things felt and seen in days too crowded for recording. Folk dances and old wives' tales, haunted streams, the nearby isle of Magna Carta, turrets and battlements of storied Windsor furnished a plenitude of new material. There was music, and the store of books within the cottage walls was wisely chosen.

Perhaps in other villages in England, there were poets who jotted titles in a book and dreamed of epics. But the commonplace book of Milton's easily distinguishes itself by revelation of a formal plan of study,² a development of political interests and a search for a political creed. The notes on classical subjects show Milton's attitude toward the illegal taxation of Charles, his fear of the dangerous connection of Church and State, and his consideration of the advantages of the republican form of government. A tragedy on an early British theme is contemplated as offering occasion for a discussion of the woes stirred up by monks and priests because of their restrictions on the marriage tie. There are references, too, that show Milton to have considered the question of whether murder, at times, might be divinely sanctioned. The opinions implicit in the book are not the result of random conjecture, but are based on a well-ordered program

of reading, which was to extend through many years and supply an understanding of the troubled times in which he lived. What he should have learned at Cambridge, Milton had resolved, unsparingly, to teach himself.

There were few in the village with whom he could discuss his studies, but there were many who delighted to tell him the stories of the neighborhood. To Milton's pagan gods and Christian saints were added the rural goblins, fays and tricky sprites that lingered still in Horton. Pan's pipes were there, so beautifully attuned to the playing of pastorals that for a time it seemed that they alone would satisfy John Milton. His days were garlanded with a canzonet to the glory of celestial music, an amorous sonnet to the nightingale, and those two, contrasting poems, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, the gemmed soliloquies of contemplative youth. Exquisitely musical, richly suggestive, intellectually and sensuously, they offer promise of the great power that was to manifest itself when the emotions of Milton had been deeply stirred. They are supreme expressions of content with the world of fantasy and sheltering reality in which the poet was dwelling, of youthful love for that fair land to which he had resolved a life's devotion. Only in the beautiful extravagance of their imagery, can one detect the restless spirit that would fret against the gentle bonds of Horton.

Visits to London deepened friendship with Henry Lawes, eight years Milton's senior, formerly a singing boy at Salisbury Cathedral, and esteemed one of England's greatest musicians. It was due to Lawes's suggestion that Milton undertook the completion of a masque, conceived at Cambridge in contrast to the comedies he had seen performed there.³ This was *Arcades* or *The Arcadians*. It was written in the manner of the Elizabethans, but with a purer spirit. The masque was an aristocratic form of entertainment, severely criticized because of the great expenditure its magnificence entailed. The occasion Lawes had been commissioned to celebrate was the birthday of the Dow-

ager Duchess of Derby, who resided at Harefield House, ten miles from Horton on the River Colne. Here once a pastoral had been enacted for Queen Bess and she had walked beneath a noble avenue of elms, still called Queen's Walk. The Duchess had been already immortalized by Spenser. She was old now, but Milton praised her radiance with a fervor as ardent as that his father had expended on Elizabeth. And one is glad of this, for the great lady was to have only a few more birthdays. Though the masque is no more than a series of compliments, its brevity and a certain light, ethereal quality prevent the adulation from seeming sycophantic. It was performed simply and affectionately by the kinsfolk of the Duchess. Had there been many such masques, surely the Puritans of the time could not have held such plays in disesteem.

Most bitter of the contemporary attacks on dramatic performances was *Histrionastix*, written by Prynne. He had already occasioned Laud anxiety by his attacks on Arminianism and by criticism of the Court of High Commission. In the index of *Histrionastix*, women actors were defined as "notorious whores." Although the book was written before Queen Henrietta Maria acted in a pastoral at Somerset House, Laud used it as a basis for a libel, claiming that the definition in the index was insulting to the Queen. Result, an inconvenient enemy was sentenced to be fined, pilloried, branded and to have his books burnt and his ears cut off. So, humbled and mutilated, he was condemned to pass the rest of his life in prison.

The publicity aroused by his crime and punishment stirred the loyal Inns of Court to entertain royalty with the most elaborate and costly masque hitherto seen in England. For a time there was a gay fluttering of this gorgeous, butterfly-like form of literature and then it was crushed by the sober struggle of the civil war. Today, by all but scholars, it is forgotten, except for *Comus*, the masque of Milton and Henry Lawes. The swan song of the most courtly type of entertainment known to Eng-

lish letters was a solemn celebration of spiritual chastity. Physical chastity had been often the subject for such entertainments and the painted ladies of the court had taken great delight in enacting a terrified maidenhood in Greuze-like sentimental fashion. Few of them could have understood the theme of chastity as a thing of the spirit. Lacking a rhyme catch, they would have found it difficult, also, to have memorized the blank verse of Milton's longer speeches.

The masque was performed in September of 1634 at Ludlow Castle, Shropshire. In Ludlow Castle there had been proclaimed king the young prince that Richard of Gloucester's treachery sent to his death in the Tower. There Arthur had spent with Catharine of Aragon his honeymoon and the last months of his brief life. More recently the Great Hall had been used for the installation of the future Charles I as Prince of Wales. The present occasion to be celebrated was the assumption of the official residence by the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord President of the Council of Wales. Such an event was apt for the realization of Milton's wish to teach virtue and the beauty of virtue to an English audience,—“to imbreed and cherish” his hearers in “the seeds of virtue and public civility.” One thinks that, truly, the poem was directed, by promises and warnings, to inspire the Earl of Bridgewater to just fulfilling of his office:

He that hath light within his own cleer brest
May sit i' th center, and enjoy bright day,
But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the mid-day Sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.

The final song, too, is on an admonitory note:

Love virtue, she alone is free,
She can teach ye how to clime
Higher than the spearing chime;
Or, if virtue feeble were,
Heav'n itself would stoop to her.

The exquisite apostrophe to Sabrina, the loveliness that enwraps the central theme in singing robes, won such admiration that lack of dramatic interest went unnoticed and the austerity of the theme was pleasantly obscured.

In London, Lawes was asked frequently to furnish copies of the masque. In 1637, from weariness with his service as amanuensis, he had it published. Milton went often to the capital to see his brother, Christopher, a barrister in the Inns of Court. There he searched the bookshops for his needs and increased his knowledge of music and mathematics. He did not reveal authorship of the masque.

Nearer home, it won for him a valuable friend. Sir Henry Wotton, formerly ambassador to the Republic of Venice, in his old age was serving as Provost of Eton, and so was Milton's neighbor. A meeting had been arranged to mutual satisfaction; for Milton greatly enjoyed hearing Sir Henry's talk of Venice, and of Florence, where the diplomat had attended the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Sir Henry was delighted with the student of Petrarch and Dante, who had learned much of Italian music from Henry Lawes. Perhaps, they talked of the Italian origin of the masque. Sir Henry was, himself, a poet and Milton, after the first visit, sent him a manuscript copy of the *Comus*. It renewed most pleasantly the old Ambassador's memories of Italy and won the highest praise for Doric delicacy of odes and songs. When Lawes finally published the "dainty piece of entertainment," it was prefaced by Sir Henry's gracious letter to "the author."

Milton's first published verse had been his sonnet to Shakespeare. This was his second and it was sponsored by a courtly cavalier. Such literary associations seemed to bode well for the future. And yet, other such masques for the entertainment of noblemen, a few more friendships with those of rank and fashion, travel abroad, a discreet conciliation with the Church, a wealthy

marriage, and how great a voice might have been lost to England!

A poem to his father shows that that indulgent gentleman was now impatient of his son's preoccupation with poetry. In the year that *Comus* was published, death deprived young Milton of the gentle, self-effacing care of his mother. His concern with beauty and immortality, of which he wrote so glowingly to Diodati; his study of the events of bygone days and unusual tongues was in danger of withdrawing him to an aloof empyrean to the lack of that England, which had need of him.

Visitations of the Churches and the colleges of the Universities were undertaken to bring them into conformity with Laudian dogma and ceremony. John Milton concerned himself with securing incorporation into Oxford that he might enjoy the benefits of a master's degree from that institution as well as from Cambridge. John Hampden was tried for his refusal to pay ship money, and the kingdom rang with his defence. John Milton pursued the study of the separate Italian states after Rudolph had withdrawn the German arms from Italy. He begged that Diodati send him Justinian, "the historian of the Venetians." The congregations of the Dutch and Walloons in England were dispersed and the Puritans were forbidden to emigrate. By a Star Chamber decree of 1637, there vanished that freedom of the press of which England had been so justly proud. John Milton proclaimed that his diligence and concentration were such that no delay, no rest, no care or thought of anything should hold him from the rounding off of some great period of his studies. The Scotch rioted against the use of the Prayer Book Laud sought to impose upon them. They signed a great Covenant condemning Romanism. Milton considered taking up his residence at some one of the Inns of the lawyers, where he might find "a pleasant and shady walk" and a more convenient habitation among friends of congenial tastes. In England, Charles, ruling without benefit of

Parliament, developed, piece by piece, the policy of despotism. His two lieutenants, Laud and Wentworth, strove to stir away the seething bubbles of discontent with great iron spoons of "thorough," while England writhed and shook with her suffering and with Gargantuan laughter at their efforts. John Milton engaged the assistance of his friends to facilitate his journey into Italy.⁴

And yet such austere abstention from the struggles of his countrymen should not cause our impatience. It did not augur indifference, rather wisdom. To have embroiled himself at this time in the dissensions of his country would have been courageous. To await the completion of his apprenticeship was more courageous. Milton's note book was becoming a veritable arsenal of ammunition for the pamphlets he would later write in service of the state.

The Horton period was closed, not with a poetic farewell to his country, but with a trumpet blast of denunciation of ills that yet he could not well contend against. By a tragic accident, in August of 1637, Milton's friend, Edward King, had met death by drowning in the Irish Channel. The poets of Cambridge determined to publish a commemorative volume in his honor, such as the older poets were preparing at this time for "rare Ben Jonson." Because of his friendship for King and his college reputation, an invitation was sent to Horton for Milton's services. His contribution to the volume derives its importance not only from such beauty as was far in excess even of expectation, but from its fair apostrophe to fame and its vigorous digression in denunciation of the Anglican clergy and the educational system that produced a priesthood so remiss.

In the elegy is concentrated all of the contempt that Milton had for the young clerics who emerged from Cambridge obscurantism to parrot their cheap wit and to corrupt their congregations with windy rantings and hypocrisy.⁵ To describe such shepherds, Milton produced that most powerful metaphor, mixed,

through excess of indignant imagination, and yet as lucid as a lightning flash:

Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A Sheep hook.

To threaten their destruction Milton used in his concluding lines another figure that still perplexes annotators. Is the two-handed engine that stands ready to give the fatal stroke, the two chambered parliament, the Old and New Testament, the sword with two edges that issued from Christ's mouth, or is it the axe of the executioner? Perhaps, it should be interpreted simply as the most dread vengeance that the individual reader is capable of imagining.

In contrast to hated hirelings of the Church, the poem celebrates Lycidas, compact of light and typifying the liberal culture which Cambridge stood so much in need of. Young King, amiable, pious and studious, as he was, could have been but a pale embodiment of those resplendent qualities that Milton celebrated.

With critics of English literature, the poem ranks as one of the supreme elegies of the English language. As a milestone in Milton's life it was, alike, epochal. It served as vengeful valedictory to that University, which, ironically, was to bear the expense of publication,⁶ and as a prelude to the struggle Milton was later to wage against despoilers of English liberty. It is, too, a tribute to that fame of which he was already in pursuit.

Having written it, Milton was ready to undertake his travels. The last lines of the elegy are autobiographic:

At last he rose, and twitched his Mantle blew:
Tomorrow to fresh Woods, and Pastures new.

CHAPTER IV

THE NOBLE INGLESE

THROUGH the friendship of Lawes and Sir Henry Wotton, Milton took with him a letter from the Warden of the Cinque Ports to serve as warrant for his leaving the kingdom, introductions to English dignitaries, resident abroad,¹ and letters to merchants and agents, who might assist his search for rare books and rare music. He was furnished, too, with good advice that had been of service in troubled times to the Ambassador.² From his father, Milton had a purse so plump as to attest the generosity of the scrivener at Horton. For intangible equipment the traveler took with him a greater knowledge of Italian than could commonly be gained through studying outside of Italy, ardent appreciation of the glory of the past and of present beauty in whatsoever form he might encounter it.

His route lay, probably, through London and Canterbury to Dover and thence across the English Channel to Calais. From there, he sped to Paris and presented a letter to Michael Branthwaite, tutor to the son of the English Ambassador, Viscount Sligo. Branthwaite had served Sir Henry Wotton in Venice and had continued to reside there for some time after his chief's departure. He was able to give valued advice as to Italian travel. Through him, Milton was introduced to the Ambassador, who arranged a meeting with his colleague, representing Sweden. Queen Christina's agent was not, himself, a Swede. He was a philosopher, who was attempting to negotiate with the reluctant Laud a union of Protestant churches. He had been exiled from his native Holland for maintaining the cause of the Arminians. Escaping after two years, by the aid of his wife and a

certain chest in which she had been accustomed to dispatch his literary fare, for ten years he had been an expatriate. After an unfortunate return to his own country, he had been befriended by the great Oxenstiern and, through him, had come to serve Christina. Posterity has forgotten the adventure of the life of Hugo Grotius, but remembers him as the author of the *Mare liberum* and *De jure belli et pacis*. Milton showed discrimination in regarding him as the man most to be venerated in Europe. What talk they had is not recorded. Perhaps they spoke of Galileo, whom Grotius recently had visited and found thin and borne down by age, persecution and infirmities. For the poet of the empyrean greatly admired this blind astronomer for his defiance of the Church. There are scant notes on Milton's French sojourn. His stay was brief, not that he disliked France, but that he lusted eagerly for Italy.

The country of Milton's dreams was suffering under the double tyranny of state and Church. Due to a strict censorship of the press, exercised through licensing, it was at this time sterile of masterpieces but fecund with rhyming jests, manuals of devotion, and dissertations on theology. Scores of Academies provided assemblages where scholars, sceptics and young poets could be assured of audiences,—audiences not too critical, since every member in turn revealed his compositions. Here men could speak what, sometimes, they dared not set down. Here they could laugh over bland pastorals with stanzas that rebounded on the unwary with a shocking double meaning.

Milton found the Academies admirable, not only for the cultivation of polite letters, but for the forming and maintaining of friendships. In one of his prose pamphlets, he has named a half dozen of those men he most often met in Florence. They were chosen from patrician poets, artists and those who wrote on art, advocates and liberal priests. Milton recited his Latin poems, improvised in their own Italian and astounded them with knowledge, besides, of Spanish, French, Greek, and

Hebrew. They esteemed him a polyglot, who could revive dead tongues and whose praise required the idioms of every language. He found these friends more to his liking than the students and fellows of Christ's. There was a sunshine in their wit, fervor in their passion, sympathy and understanding that made the Milton of Italy vastly different from the Milton of Cambridge and Horton. He heard his homeland praised for that liberty he knew she lamentably lacked, yet found praise pleasant,—an augury that redoubtable England would soon rid herself of unaccustomed tyranny. For himself, the encomiums of Italians were so many and so flowery that he brought home a store of canzonets, Latin epistles, odes, distichs, and tetrastichs, such as he never could have afforded, had there been a duty set on flattery.

One, only, of their tributes taxed his courtesy. He was presented, with a handsome dedication, a series of fifty sonnets, written to a country mistress in such clever fashion as to conceal from the casual half a hundred of obscenities and sly jests at the expense of Milton's friends.³ However, it may have been through the offices of its author, a friend of Galileo's, that Milton, on his return visit, gained access to the great astronomer at his villa d'Arcetri. The sonnets journeyed back to England, where they remained hidden during Milton's life and for long afterwards. In the prose pamphlets, he does not mention the name of their author among those who honored him in Italy. The visit to Galileo became his boast.

His new friends, no doubt understood. They esteemed their visitor an ascetic, who yet had a voluptuous appreciation of beauty, one driven always forward by ardent quest of glory. They called him a noble Inglese, knew of his determination to labor and study that, perhaps, he might leave something to after times, so written that posterity should not willingly let it die. He wished to add to God's glory by the honor and instruction of his country. England's mighty deeds had been chronicled by monks and mechanics. Milton's prose and Milton's verse would so burnish

them that they would dazzle all the world. The members of those Academies in Florence, the *Svogliati* and the *Apasti*, showed no scepticism as to his ability to realize his aims.⁴

From Florence, via Siena, Milton traveled to Rome to find it swarming with clergy, come to attend services in thanksgiving for the completion of Saint Peter's. For monks and priests, Saint Peter's was the cynosure of glory. For certain of the cardinals, the City held another shrine, where they worshiped in company with poets and diplomats: Leonora Baroni was singing in Rome. In Greek, Latin, Italian, French and Spanish poems, her admirers wove for her a garland of song and published it so that all men might know how rare was the charm of her voice, the beauty of her face and form. She was the daughter of the great singer, Adriana Basili, herself a siren, who in Naples had beguiled the Prince of Stigliano and so many others that priests called her a Neapolitan Armida. Vincenzo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, had been her entertainer. His nephew, the Cardinal Gonzaga, sent her medals and rosaries when he was ill and love songs when he had recovered. Later she had come to Rome, where soon she won the worship of sonneteers and the attention of three distinguished cardinals. The constancy of Cardinal Gonzaga, who had inherited the dukedom, her reported conquests of the Duke of Alba, and the Grand Duke of Muscovy, her vocal triumphs at the festivals of Church and court make explicable Rome's lavish praises.

It is to the credit of young Milton that, in a country where beautiful women abounded, he reserved his adoration for no less a divinity than Leonora.⁵ The lady could not, perhaps, have understood Milton's early dream of finding such a one as Dante or Petrarch had celebrated so that he, too, might become a reowner of a love honorable and everlasting, destitute of the joy and weariness of fulfillment, a love that might abide to chime to future ages two names made sweet by the great power of one. Leonora, like her mother, was to have many lovers and, in later years, was to hold her state as mistress of the Pope, when the

charm of her voice was all but forgotten. The homage of the great, who sought for favors through her influence, was to become dearer than the memory of her artistic triumphs. When in after years there were recalled to her the privileges she had been accorded in France by Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarin, it came about that she would shrug her shoulders and express surprise that, in view of her relations with his Holiness, Pope Clemente Nono, any interest should be shown in reviving such trivial memories. So exacting did she become in her demands that she was angered when a Cardinal of the House of Medici presumed to leave Rome without the courtesy of a farewell.

Such tribute as a traveling English poet, son of a scrivener, might render to this woman could hardly cause a ripple of interest in the calm waters of her triumphant existence. To be sure, Milton was even more exquisite than herself in his appreciation of cadence and rhythm. She, too, composed and was impatient with all that was imperfect. In her singing, Leonora could pass from one tone to another with such skill as to afford her hearers the charm of feeling the enharmonic and chromatic scales. Few could have appreciated this ability to so nice a degree as Milton. The emissary of Richelieu, who reported on Leonora in connection with the Cardinal's project of producing certain operas in Paris, praised her playing on the theorbo and the viol. She was a daughter of the Muses and it is, perhaps, regrettable that Milton could not have recognized her as sister and cherished her friendship throughout his life. But her voice, her golden hair and dark, flashing eyes, her grace and seeming modesty, won from him a warmer tribute and one that was, perforce, more fleeting. To Milton, Leonora's singing was as the music of the spheres, of which he had written in his early years at Cambridge and at Horton,—an echo of the song of pure content, sung in the morn of endless light before God's sapphire colored throne. Hers was an Orpheus voice that could move

forests and allure the moon to earth, or so John Milton tells us. He wrote to Diodati ⁶ of this wondrous woman, of the beauty of her form and mind, of his happiness and his despair. To the lady, he offered devoutly the gift of his poor heart, which, when he has described it, one thinks must needs have been accepted. Perhaps it might have been, for some little time, had Leonora been older and more assured as to her future. Vertue has engraved young Milton as he must have looked when he stood before her as she played upon her viol,—soft, fair hair, curling over carefully pleated ruff, the forehead free from cankerous lines, mouth delicately formed, nose long, and happy, widely open eyes.

He seemed an exquisite, too fair, himself, to have cared till then for woman's beauty, so fair, himself, that had Leonora been a sensuous queen, satiate of pomp and courtly love-making, she might have wished to add him, for grace and purity, to her long list of lovers. She might have loved him for those qualities the years had filched from her. But Leonora was twenty-seven and very sage. She gloried in the idolatry of her Roman court. To the visiting young English poet, she carelessly assigned the welcome task of inditing praises in Italian; for Italian, she told him, was the language of love's delight. Milton gave to her praise higher than he ever accorded any other woman: her voice was the voice of one from the heavenly choir, who dwelt within to teach her listeners with what happy ease man could become accustomed to immortal harmonies; God, who was diffused in all things, in Leonora's voice, alone, was vocative. Surely, the Italian sonnets, as well as the Latin epigrams, were written for the pleasure of this woman. Milton had too high an estimate of his own worth, too many intellectual interests, to have been lightly susceptible. And having hymned Leonora, he could not soon have sighed after some lesser being. Rather, it seems her radiant image long remained, and dulled the beauty of his coun-

trywomen. He went about his later wife-getting as one who buys bread to satisfy hunger, when he has nothing wherewith to pay the gods for their ambrosia.

And Leonora grew old and stout and lost her voice. Each day of her life she received a great dish from the Pope's own kitchen at Castelgandolfo. Three or four times in the week, presents came to her of the Pope's selecting. Only those who blundered referred to the days when she had been a singer. When the presents no longer came and Rome acclaimed her Pope's successor, Leonora Baroni succeeded in achieving a natural death. But time guards well his secrets. The image that John Milton took from Rome was free from dross, and shining.

On his way to Naples, it chanced that Milton traveled with an Eremite friar, who promised to introduce him there to Giacomina Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa and sometime patron and friend of Tasso's, to whose Leonora Milton had compared his own in a way that could have given no pleasure to the earlier lover. Manso was, himself, a poet, but better known as the wealthy founder of a famous Academy, one of those revivals of the academies of the fifteenth century, such as Milton had already known in Florence and in Rome. The Marquis was nearly eighty, yet he was so pleased with the young English traveler that he acted as his guide through the tortuous streets of Naples and corridors of the Palace of the Spanish Viceroy. In a farewell letter in Latin hexameters, Milton confided to Manso his ambition to revive in verse the Knights of the Round Table and their puissant King. He expressed a naïve hope that, if he should succeed, he would find a friend like Manso, who would equally know how to reward Apollo's children.

It would have been well had Milton confined his confidence to his literary projects. In Naples, he failed to observe the wary counsel of Sir Henry Wotton. He did not keep close his thoughts. He was fresh from the pomp and ritual of Rome, he had seen many ecclesiasts. Perhaps, he had felt jealousy of Cardinals Maz-

arin and Rospigliosi when he had rendered homage at the shrine of Leonora. He spoke his views on Romanism very freely in the Academies and surprised his hearers by vehement defense of Protestantism. Manso was old. He wished no blot upon his closing record with the Church. When the Englishman took leave, the Marquis told him that he would have delighted to have honored him with greater attention, had not the frankness Milton had shown as to his religious views rendered this impossible. Manso gave him richly wrought cups and a distich which proclaimed high admiration. Except for his religion, alone, Manso would have pronounced him, not Anglic only, but angelic.

On Milton's visit to Rome, he had been entertained with other visitors at a dinner at the English Jesuit College. Certain merchants in Naples warned him that he could no longer expect such favors.⁷ The letters they received from Rome stated that the English Jesuits were angry at the Poet's freedom of speech and that, should he return, they would set snares for him. Despite these warnings and the allure of an earlier plan to cross to Sicily and Greece, Milton resolved to turn towards Rome. Years later, he gave as reason a distaste for pleasure-travel at a time when his countrymen were contending at home for liberty. Chronology takes from this statement something of its virtue. When Milton left England, the times already were out of joint, but the First Bishops' War did not begin until March of 1639, when Milton had already left Naples. The Second Bishops' War, which Milton dated as coinciding with his return, was not begun until a full year after his arrival in England.⁸ Sometimes memory is so kind as to obliterate the folly of a youthful reason and substitute in its place another, more agreeable to one's exacting self-regard. However disturbing the news from England may have been, Milton's return was a leisurely one.

For two months, he lingered in Rome. Whether or not a portion of his poetic compliments to Leonora were written at this time, there is no means of knowing. We do know that on this

visit, he was given the privilege of examining a Greek Ms., thanks to a letter that he carried with him to one of the librarians of the Vatican. This Holstenius was secretary to Cardinal Barberini,⁹ nephew and councilor of the Pope. So appreciative did Milton show himself of the Ms. and so radiant was his erudition that Holstenius deemed it fitting to bring him to the attention of the Cardinal. Francesco Barberini was the ecclesiast especially charged with the duty of cultivating the good will towards Rome of visiting Englishmen. His great palace housed a theater, where the public, to the number of three thousand, might be entertained with operas. One of these was performed on March 1, 1639, which fell on Sunday. Since the fates are jesters, it chanced that this, the one that Milton heard, was the work of Giulio Rospigliosi, the cardinal lover of Leonora, who, as Pope Clement IX, was to cherish her until his death. Milton does not praise the music of the opera, *Chi Soffra Speri*, but in a letter to Holstenius is enthusiastic over the magnificence of the entertainment and the cordiality of the host.

Writing from Florence on March 17, he contrasted Cardinal Barberini with other of the world's great in such a way that it appears that Milton's thoughts must have been on Charles of England. He praised the Cardinal as lacking that "sad superciliousness" and "courtly haughtiness," which Milton deemed so far removed from true magnanimity. He attended the last three of the weekly meetings held in March by the *Svogliati*. The minutes of the Academy record his literary prowess. He won fresh admiration and revived his former friendships. It was on this visit that he sought out the aged Galileo in the villa where he had been allowed to retire and where such glory shone that Milton was able to record impressions which in old age were to enrich his greatest epic.

From Lucca, Bologna and Ferrara, Milton passed to Venice. Here he spent one month. Other than this, we know no more of his story than that he shipped from there a number of rare

and curious volumes, collected on his journeying, together with a chest or two of books of music. Through Verona and Milan, he crossed to the Penian Alps. These past, Italy lay behind. How much of youth and joy of youth Milton left in that fair land, we cannot know.

The memorials of his visit to Switzerland are very different from those of Italy. It was at Geneva that he learned of the death of his young friend, Diodati. Day by day, he was in converse with a learned kinsman of this friend, a professor of theology. One Italian only he saw in Geneva, Camillo Cerdagni, a religious refugee from Naples. Cerdagni asked for an autograph and Milton wrote for him a line from Horace and the two last lines of *Comus*:

If Virtue feeble were,
Heav'n itself would stoop to her.¹⁰

Perhaps, in the free Alps, he thought of the great need of succor there was in England for "the mountain nymph, sweet Liberty."

On August 8, 1639, he was again in his own country. The solemn asseveration he has made of the retention of his virtue during his Italian sojourn is faintly amusing,¹¹ but not gratuitous. Even thus early, Italianized Englishmen had the reputation of being devils incarnate. A visit to Italy was regarded as something, in itself, of a pollution. The matter of his purity, Milton felt, was of national importance. Had it been sullied, England would have lost the mystic strength he wished to bring to her as her high priest.

PART II

COMBAT

Consider Milton as a Briton, and a Brave One too, and One who sacrificed more than most of us will care to, and ventur'd still more in the cause of civil and religious liberty.

JONATHAN RICHARDSON,

*Explanatory Notes and Remarks on Milton's
Paradise Lost with the Life of the Author,
1734.*

CHAPTER V

ANONYMOUS PAMPHLETEER

THAT England, to which in 1639 Milton returned, was an England weary and rebellious after ten years of the personal rule of Charles I. He had not governed in accordance with the principles of the Petition of Rights, although in June of 1628, this had been accepted as the law of the land. It had forbidden billeting, the use of martial law, arbitrary taxation and arbitrary imprisonment. Charles had in 1629, after the dissolution of parliament and in contravention of its privilege, called various of its members before judges of the King's Bench to give an account of their utterances at Westminster. That parliamentarians were condemned to fines and imprisonment, unless they would make amends to the Crown, showed how well the King controlled his judiciary,—showed that arbitrary imprisonment was still, *de facto*, a part of the royal prerogative. One of those who chose confinement to recognition of the King's claim in this matter was Sir John Eliot,—he who had taken the lead in framing famous resolutions condemning the introduction of innovations in the Church and condemning those who advised the levying of Tonnage and Poundage and those who paid the same. In the Tower, Sir John Eliot had contracted consumption. There he perished and in 1632 was buried, by order of the King, "in the church of the parish where he died." The struggle against arbitrary imprisonment had gained a martyr. His spirit would work against the King's control of the judiciary and the retention of courts dangerous to freedom,—that of the King's Bench and the Court of High Commission.

Effort again to levy Tonnage and Poundage had resulted in

1629 in a boycott of trade for six months in the capital. This had not weakened the King's intention to persist in arbitrary taxation. Rights that through desuetude or commutation had long ceased to exist were claimed as though there had been no break in royal practice. Men were fined for Distrain of Knighthood and for infringing on non-existent royal forests. King and favorites batted at Whitehall on grants of monopolies to individuals as "corporations,"—individuals so corporated to avoid a statute of King James against the grant of exclusive rights to men other than inventors. The unprecedented levy on inland towns of an obsolete tax for the building of a navy had met the opposition of John Hampden and been upheld by the Court of Exchequer. One of the judges, on that occasion, had gone so far as to declare that no act of parliament could void the King's power to command his subjects, their persons, their goods and moneys.

Lacking the chance to protest that the sessions of a parliament would have afforded, lacking such political organization as could have made known party principles, lacking the privilege of public meeting or freedom of the press, discontent smoldered and made ready to burst into a dangerous flame. A foreign policy that would have brought honor to England might have diverted attention from domestic ills. But the monarchs of Europe were, happily, free from any such fears of England as the Tudors had engendered. The one matter on the Continent in which the King showed interest was the regaining of the Palatinate for his kinsfolk. He had neither skill nor force to accomplish even this. The borrowed glory of Rubens and Van Dyke could not obscure his foreign failures.

The England to which Milton had returned was as the England which Milton had left, in that it focused its intensest hate upon the Primate, William Laud. Milton had detested Laud at Cambridge. He had carried his hatred with him into Italy. He returned to find the Archbishop more intolerable than ever. One might be reduced to beggary by arbitrary taxation, one might

mark, through a long period of arbitrary imprisonment, the slow corruption of the flesh by prison ills and still keep pure and fresh one's soul, but if the will of Laud prevailed,—Laud, who should have been the spiritual leader of all England, this might not be. He had carried into the great world the narrow hatred of narrow Puritans whom he had known at Oxford. Discipline, order, uniformity were his trinity. Infinite patience, determination and the will to use both obsolete and present methods to his purpose threatened the spiritual freedom of England more nearly than had the martyrs' fires of Mary and Elizabeth. Bishops were to condition the education of the realm, to prescribe most strictly the manner of worship, to censor the press and, from the courts, to hand down judgments on morality. Laud invented for them, too, a new form of pluralities: he persuaded the King to invest them with high offices of state. Courtiers, dissenters and country squires, alike, cried out upon this plague of bishops. Milton's attack upon the Church in *Lycidas* had not been for the crowd, but men had clearly understood the pamphlets that Prynne and Dr. Bostwick wrote against the bishops. They applauded the temerity of the clergyman, Burton, in defying his superiors. The England that Milton returned to had seen these men pilloried and mangled in Palace Yard. Charles, at Whitehall, must have heard the mob cry out its indignation, but it is not on record that the matter proved of royal interest. More often, England suffered silently. Some of her citizens fled beyond the seas, some few resisted passively. For the most part, the Stuart king profited by the lesson in submission taught the nation by the Tudors.

Scotland had not learned this lesson and had no wish to. There feudal lairds were more dangerous in opposition than were in England peaceful squires. Beyond the Tweed, men were inured to defiance of laws, more often bad than good. The England that Milton now returned to had been plunged into a war to enforce on Scotland the adoption of Laud's Episcopal régime. It was not a national war. It was a Bishop's war. Dead Knox had proven

stronger than English soldiers fighting for lawn sleeves. Military commands from a despotic King, who would become even more tyrannical in the event of victory, were not inspiring. The expedition failed.

Lest the people should discover the weakness of their sovereign, Charles summoned Wentworth from Ireland, created him Earl of Strafford, permitted him the use of whatsoever methods he might deem conducive to strong government. The England Milton returned to was vividly aware of the crisis Strafford had been called to face.

Milton, perhaps, was not. He was young and fresh from Italy. True, the young man was father to the politician, but somewhat a reluctant father. He would have preferred to talk to Diodati of the thoughts of youth,—to tell him of the friends that he had won in Italy, of Leonora....

There was so much to tell on his home coming. He would have liked to talk before a great fire, with chestnuts crackling on the hearth and, outside, the south wind battering at their seclusion. He would have shown him the brave cups that Manso himself had designed with a paradisal scene and a phoenix that watched the rising of the sun over a glossy sea. They would have fingered the beautifully wrought bird and spoken of its legend. Diodati would have given Milton news of the ills that England suffered under, of how great the need was that she should rise from ashes of oppression to greet the dawn of a new day. They would have caressed the little Eros on the cup of Manso,—the child god, who flew upwards always to dart his arrows at those highest in the clouds.

They would have talked of themselves,—of Milton's dream of writing of Merlin and King Arthur, perhaps of Brutus, who had slain his friend that Rome might gain her vanquished liberty; of Diodati's progress in the study of herbs and their right usage. And Milton would have sought a balm for heart-hid wounds that turned his thoughts too often inward. But Diodati

had died. Milton could do no more than body his longings into an epitaph,¹ not so gravely beautiful as *Lycidas*, but burdened with a heavy, personal sorrow. For the epitaph is shadowed deep with the foreboding that Milton could not be that one in a thousand who would find and keep his own true mate. He would have great need of friendship. But Diodati, arriving virgin pure in paradise, would ever act and repeat the endless heavenly nuptials. Milton must have been very hungry in his dull lodgings in St. Bride's Churchyard to have pictured a future life so warmly amorous for his dead friend. Again, and again, while he wrote of his sorrow, the thought returned that he was putting away from him a little longer those duties which, as England's shepherd, he must perform. And work would be a panacea.²

He was not idle. In the day, he taught his nephews, the little sons of Anne. At night, he read from his well worn Testaments, from chronicles of Holinshed and legends of King Arthur. He thought upon the crimes of men, on murder, witchcraft, robbery and rape. Sometimes he stood at his window and watched the lights on Ludgate Hill and on the barges of the River Thames. He thought upon the civic chains of Italy and her loose moral code that snared men into closer bonds than ever Church or state could gird them with. He pondered on the power of kings, —where sovereignty should reside within a nation and of how states, glorious in their history, had fallen to decline.

How best to teach? His note book³ held the reminder that Englishmen, Alcuin and John, by Charlemagne's appointment, had founded universities at Paris and at Pavia. Great princes still had need of teachers. No longer, like King Alfred, did they search for wisdom, no longer were they meek before the learned, as had been Charlemagne. It was not for his sister's nimble-witted sons that he filled his note book. Those pages on kings and tyrants,⁴ on law and on taxation were for his own study and his later use. Should he instruct by building up a mighty epic, as Dante's pen had done for Italy, or by refurbishing the priest-writ

history of his little island into a noble temple where laymen and the infidel might come for greater strengthening? Below stairs, the tailor, Russell, cut and stitched and basted, set piece to piece, and gossiped with his neighbors of what extremities King Charles was in and how the Queen and her court ladies had set a curb upon their spending, but held their heads more proudly than before. John Milton seemed strangely and pallidly uninteresting. And had the tailor known that once in Milton's room had gleamed Satanic majesty, he would have liked his quiet lodger even less. In Milton's notes, as subject for an epic, there was listed now, the fall of man.

Though throngs of angels and the fecund man and woman who were to people the great earth might visit Milton's quarters, he found them far too cramped for his own housing. Before the year was over, he had secured a dwelling in Aldersgate Street.⁵ Here Milton's prosperous father had once owned property. The new home was a "garden house" at the end of an entry,—one of the quietest places in London. With his books and music, Milton was content,—rapturous, sometimes, in the pursuit of his studies. Once a month, or a little oftener, he so far made bold with his body as to keep a "gawdy day"⁶ with two young friends who left Gray's Inn for frolicking.

As neighbors, he had Diodati's father and his former teacher, Alexander Gill, who, being driven from Oxford, had set up a school near by. Their houses were spacious, and uniform with his. On Aldersgate Street, was Peterhouse, the mansion of the Marquis of Dorchester, and there, too, was the home of the Earl of Thanet. The Sun and Moon taverns and the gate of St. Martins-le-Grand, with its equestrian statue of King James, showed the street to be English. Otherwise, by its symmetry and straightness, it might have seemed Italian.

In this quiet place, Milton hoped that he might remain undisturbed by the civil dissension which Providence and the courage of the English people, he trusted, soon would terminate. He had

contempt for trencher poets, who wrote to flatter patrons or to serve parties. They seemed to him on parity with hireling priests. A poet should deal with first principles and with deeds so great that legends sprang from them. A true poet was a true priest, a diviner of the nation's destiny and so, worthy of reverence. There was abundant argument in Scripture for Milton's thesis. But when, within his garden close, he pondered on King Arthur and his knights, their forms grew dim. Before him, he saw a proud king, who needed to be lessoned, a struggling people, searching for a leader. And it seemed to Milton, in the stillness of the garden, that God sought, too, a leader for those English people and that he bade John Milton speak.

How should he speak? Not, surely, in Greek or Latin, for the need was English and English words should answer it. So many were the voices raised! There were the ballad mongers of St. Paul's, whose crudities jarred harshly on young Milton's sensitivity. One man, alone, John Taylor, "Water Poet,"⁷ had written scores of books against the "Amsterdammable" opinions of sectaries and the Romish practices of the high clergy. Should Milton, after so long training, stoop to the writing of such gibberish as Russell, the tailor, and his neighbors could purchase on a broadside? These mouthings seemed an abuse to liberty of speech.

And what was liberty and how should there be made right use of it? And to Milton, considering and harking back to the abuses he had known in Church-ruled Cambridge and remembering the uninstructed, harmful freedom of self-scourged Italians, it seemed that only could man's life be truly free, if it conformed to a discipline, which should take its rise in religion and diffuse itself throughout the manners and institutions of the commonwealth. Such a coveted discipline from so pure a religion was worthy the advocacy of all his genius and the strength of all his industry.

It was a period when tub-thumpers and able Abigails were dis-

sident in all respects but one. Each felt secure in the possession of strict infallibility in the interpretation of Scripture and the prescription of England's policies. In this belief, alone, Milton was of their number. His life was chaste. He had for three and thirty years prepared for service to his country. In spite of blundering pedagogy at Cambridge, he had no doubt but that his preparation was, in all points, excellent. He could not know how little he, himself, was free from the scholastic logic of his Cambridge tutors, how often his beliefs were motivated by desires abnormally strong, since they were desires of genius. He did not realize how little he knew of the world of affairs, how scant was his knowledge of men. He did not know these things because so often his pure spirit soared above them and reached those verities which are eternal. From such a contact, such merging with immortal truth, there was inbred in Milton a feeling of divinity, which still attended him when mortal limitations drew him down to baser levels. Such exaltation made it seem, for the moment, that what was needed for John Milton on Thursday noon was needed for all men and for all time. His weakness was the dazzled vision of one who sometimes had the strength to look the day star in the eye.

Never had England so great a need for men of vision. Laud, Strafford and the King were weltering in their blunder of trying for a second time to impose the Episcopal Establishment on Presbyterian Scotland. Troops raised by press gangs and financed by dubious taxation had mutinied and shown their friendship for the religion of their foe by destroying altar rails and attacking their Catholic commanders. It had been necessary for England to sign the Treaty of Ripon, by which she ended the war and undertook to purchase the evacuation of the Scotch. Until the purchase price was raised, she was to permit the occupation of the border counties and even to pay for the maintenance of the invading army. All claims to dictate to the northern kingdom were surrendered.

The terms of the treaty served only to shift the area of conflict. Every possible expedient for the raising of taxes already had been exhausted by the King. It was necessary to summon parliament. And so the surrender to the Scotch, embodied in the treaty, made contingent the royal surrender to the will of the nation. But for this, Charles was not ready. The royal writs he issued for election were designed to bring a truce,—a truce that would prepare his way for final triumph. As a Stuart, he was characteristically slow in learning wisdom. Having failed to manage the parliament of the spring of 1640, he had terminated its sessions in three weeks. Its major crime had been that, summoned to vote taxes for the Scottish war, it had questioned the theory of royal sovereignty. With England under invasion by an army that shared the religious beliefs and political principles of many of its dissidents, with the need for revenue immensely heightened, the King erred gravely in thinking that his second parliament of 1640 would prove amenable.

The Long Parliament in October began sessions that were to be of prime significance in English annals. Instead of three weeks, its legal life was to extend to twenty years. And yet it was not slow in undertaking labors that had been long planned. In November, Strafford was arrested and Laud was carried from Lambeth Palace to the Tower. Others of those who had abetted arbitrary rule soon joined them in imprisonment, or prudently fled the country.

In December of 1640, there was presented to the House, with signatures of 15,000, a petition for the abolition of Episcopacy, "root and branch." Until March, this consumed much time in debate, then interest was deflected by the impeachment, attainder and execution of great Strafford. On May 17, 1641, the principles of the petition were revived in a bill presented to the Commons by Sir Edward Deering. London debated in street and home and tavern this Root and Branch Bill. Its drastic provisions were such that, root and branch, it would have swept away the then existing

officers of the Established Church. In spite of the great influence of Cromwell, Vane and Haselrig, who vehemently supported the measure, the division, after its second reading, had been close. It was destined to get no farther than committee.

With hesitance, the Lords, also, considered the regimen of the Church. They were debating a bill designed to exclude bishops from the Upper House and from state offices and to prevent the clergy from engaging in secular employment. To many it seemed that, if these bills were enacted, they would not only destroy the episcopal government of the Church but would strike at the very roots of monarchy itself. One creed and one Church meant to them one king and a united kingdom. Many creeds and many churches, they felt, meant civil dissension and such loss of power to England as would surrender her to foreign enemies. It was to these men that Milton spoke.⁸

The heavy title of his discourse was *Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline in England and the Causes that Hitherto Have Hindered It*. The pamphlet was published without signature by Thomas Hill in Wood Street, Cheapside, at the Sign of the Bible. One wonders how many in the heat of those troubled days read the ninety small pages of this maiden tract. The first four sentences range in length from one-hundred-and-one to three-hundred-and-seventy-five words. Yet Milton's ponderous pyramids of clauses are often dowered with sonorous majesty. And whatsoever tricks of style may add a grace to words that have slim meaning, the quality of majesty cannot be gained so cheaply. The two books that make up the pamphlet are written, avowedly, to a friend. Their monitory tone and their apostrophes suggest that though, at first, Milton may have had in mind some individual, he very soon permitted himself to address the throne itself.

His argument is that the Reformation, when it reached the shores of England, had been arrested before attaining full tide and in the back wash, there had remained an Episcopal Establish-

ment, menacing to the state and incongruous and baneful when used as the material structure of a Protestant church. Milton would have had Charles believe that the bishops were still so tinctured with the papal scarlet of Babylon, that they were true to the Pope, disloyal to the King and false to monarchy. For monarchy, at this time, to Milton meant the liberty of the subject and the supremacy of the King. He saw nothing irreconcilable in the two phrases of his definition, for he brought into the dust and heat of controversy the cloistered serenity of an ideal political theory. This monarchy should be preserved. The heavy and unpopular Church Establishment, with one heavy hand upon the nation's purse and one stretched far to grasp at Scotland, would lead to rebellious war and the establishment of democracy. True uniformity would come from the abandonment of a doleful succession of illiterate blind guides in favor of the election of priests by parliament and magistrates. In the ecclesiastical assemblies, the King might still retain such supremacy as he had in parliament. For in the latter, he was bound by common law and, in the assemblies, would be bound by Scripture.

The base of England's greatness was not her institutions, not the common law nor civil, but piety and justice. These abstract virtues, Milton extols with such singularity of devotion that it can be plainly seen that his support could be retained only by those officers, factions or institutions of the state which in his conception, served them loyally. Allegiance to pure principles was to make him seem a turncoat; but to public opinion, he esteemed himself indifferent, claiming for himself that same aloofness which could be found in the abstract qualities of piety and justice. And these, he said, stooped not, neither changed color for aristocracy, democracy or monarchy, nor yet at all interrupted their just courses; but far above taking notice of these inferior niceties, with perfect sympathy, wherever they met, clung and kissed, one with the other.

And of their sovereign company was truth. God had created

understanding, fit and proportionate to truth, but if this understanding were filmed with ignorance or bleared with gazing on false glisterings, what matter would that be to truth? To England, God had given precedence to be the first restorer to mankind of buried truth. For this, purity of doctrine was not enough. There was lacking that discipline, which should have been "the execution and applying of doctrine home." Peace, too, he praised, for to be triumphant in a war of conquest was to win only a fading laurel out of the tears of wretched men. Lordships and victory were but the pages to justice and virtue.

There would be an accounting. God, tri-personal God, would come to reign on earth. To inculcate such a belief is always of great worth to a prophet, for, through the fear that it engenders, there will be induced into the people a willingness to follow the seer, who is confident of his omniscience. Milton was very sure of his high destiny. Among the hallelujahs and hymns of the saints, there would be one who would offer in high strains and new and lofty measures praise for the divine mercies and marvelous judgments that God had shown to England. Who could better hymn them than he who could perceive the true foundations of England's glory?

What manner of writing was this? It was an avowal of faith, not a political pamphlet. Surely it came from Olympus, not from distraught England, where dissension reigned in Church, in Parliament and courts of law. For thus its author pictured the governance of England:

There is no civil government that hath been known . . . more divinely and harmoniously tuned, more equally balanced, as it were by the hand and scale of justice, than is the commonwealth of England, where under a free and untutored monarch, the noblest, worthiest and most prudent men, with full approbation and suffrage of the people, have in their power the supreme and final determination of highest affairs.

And yet, writing so, Milton was well aware of England's extremities. In the concluding prayer, he begs that England be delivered from sedition and acknowledges that his thoughts are so dreadful that his only hope is in God's help. This most unpolitical conclusion,—this prayer, that showed how feeble was the help that came from all his study, is an earnest of that humility which, else, were hidden and evokes a sympathy for the man, no matter what opinion one may accord him as a politician.

While Milton's pamphlet was still hot from the press, the cause of the Bishops was advanced by their most learned defendant, James, Archbishop of Armagh. Basing his arguments on almost twenty years of study of the patristic writings and conciliar debates and decisions, he showed the apostolic origin of the distinction between bishop and presbyter and pled for the retention of an office venerated by antiquity. Milton answered this pamphlet by *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*. In it he, too, quoted Church Fathers to his purpose but proclaimed the Gospel as his "first rule and oracle." His conclusion was that anciently bishops and presbyters were not distinct, the one from the other, and that "the pretended episcopacy" could not be deduced from apostolic times. Church government was a human institution and when faulty, should be changed.

This second pamphlet showed a narrowing of the argument that detracted from Milton's enthusiasm. He had concerned himself before with what constituted the true foundation of greatness in a nation, the relation of church and state, the service that could be consecrated to his country by a bard. Humbly, he had appealed to God for guidance. If the question were to be only one of bishops, he had in his common-place book a well stocked armory of arguments and sufficient animus from his own experience to point them with effect. But he preferred for his opponent, not the moderate and venerable Archbishop of Armagh, but a bishop, rustling in lawns and silken cassock, one of those prinking pseudo-scholars, apt in the quoting of marginal stuffings,

pompous, fat and fleshly. A bishop such as this may not have existed in all of England, but as Milton clothed justice, and truth, and piety and peace in the beautiful human forms that the high gods were wont to take when the world was young, so too did he vest tyranny, hypocrisy, ignorance, and ostentation in the gross human figure of a bishop. For the crozier and miter, he had no respect and no fear. He would keep still his own sword at his side for use against a later adversary. His weapon for this bogey bishop would be a bludgeon.

CHAPTER VI

FRIEND OF SMECTYMNUUS

IN 1640, there was published in St. Paul's Churchyard, at the Sign of the Pied Bull, a pamphlet modestly entitled *An Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament by a Dutiful Son of the Church*. It is not lengthy and, because of its conciliatory tone, it might have gone unanswered, had it not been known that its author was the learned Bishop Hall, whose word carried weight with the supporters of the Bishops. The opposing party had many vociferous champions, but the most of these were rather distinguished by their zeal than by their learning. The claim that they made to inspiration met with incredulity, not only from their enemies, but from many who, wishing them well, could yet detect nothing of divinity in their outpourings. Samuel Butler has amusingly celebrated some of these lesser advocates.

The Oyster women locked their fish up
And trudged away to cry "No Bishop!"
.

Botchers left old clothes in the lurch,
And fell to turn and patch the Church.
.

Instead of kitchen stuff some cry
A gospel-preaching ministry,
And some for old shirts, coats or cloak,
No surplices nor service book.

The response to Bishop Hall could not be entrusted to such as these. It was undertaken by five ministers, writing conjointly

under the pseudonym of Smectymnuus. One of these was Thomas Young, Milton's former preceptor. It seems probable that the postscript of their tract, a bitter indictment of the rule of bishops in England, was the work of Milton. Certainly the whole pamphlet had his approval. Though it was addressed to Parliament, as was the *Remonstrance*, the queries it propounded and its strictures on the bishops were intended to elicit an answer from Bishop Hall. The pamphlet attracted considerable attention and the reply came speedily. *A Defense of the Humble Remonstrance* upheld the Bishops and liturgy against all assaults. It boasted of the royal favor shown its author and it twitted its multiple opponent on anonymity.

For love of truth and reverence for Christianity, or so he tells us, Milton adopted the quarrel for his own. Attack and counter-attack necessitated a harsh title for his rejoinder and, for its writing, a harsher style. *Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defense against Smectymnuus* seems deeply to have buried the poet who was John Milton. In it, an effort is made to answer his opponent in close, dialogue form and with a smashing, brutal humor designed for popularity with the masses. But it was John Taylor's "hot discourse" between a pedlar and a Romish priest,¹ that held the crowd, and one wishes that Milton had made no effort to don the jester's cap and bells. His wit was engendered by anger and was so witheringly scornful as to make one pity, rather than laugh at its victim. And this pity is increased when one notices how unfairly Milton attributes to his opponent arguments that had not been advanced, and how he twists to a diverse meaning what had been written. He derides the spruce, fastidious oratory of his episcopal opponent and, personifying it as a vainglorious woman, boasts that he will "rumple her laces, her frizzles and her bobbins, though she wince and fling never so peevishly." The Church, too, this bachelor viewed as a woman. He feared that by pranking herself in a popish mass, she would provoke the jealousy of God, as surely as a wife would

anger her husband if she affected whorish attitudes. That liberty of speaking, which Milton held most sweet to man and which had been formerly "girded and strait-laced almost to a broken-winded phthisis," it seemed to his critics, he now abused. His own free speech mocked his condemnation of the set prayers and liturgies of the Church. Their formality, at least, secured abstinence from vulgarity.

And yet when Milton is at his best in the pamphlet, he regains sympathy. The beautiful and reverential invocation wherein he summons Christ to come to the help of his Church would justify the abolition of a prayer book, could all extemporaneous prayers be of its quality. And there must be praise for his conception of the worth and dignity of priesthood as procreative with the Deity, in that it infuses God's spirit and likeness into the bodies of His high creation. How could men, charged with so great a duty, wish still to sit in the House of Lords, to act as judges and tax-gatherers?

That the pamphlet was uneven, Milton recognized. He named it a plain, ungarnished present that, in haste, he had snatched up as a thank-offering to Parliament, when there was great need of thanking it for deliverance. Harp-song, he promises later and seems to forget the bishops in the ecstasy of pledge for the future.² Perhaps, he thought he had blown them overseas by the gale of his rude laughter,—had sent them scurrying with their geometrical rhomboids balanced perilously upon their heads, sails full set, in all the lawn and sarcenet of shrouds and tackle. He would they were more stable, that they could, by their purity and worth, rid England of dissension and establish a sure brotherhood between the British and the reformers on the Continent. The grandiose scheme for a Protestant union, which Grotius had broached to Laud, found now an advocate in Milton.³

Early in 1642, he advanced such a plan in the first pamphlet to which he signed his name: *The Reason of Church Government Urged against Prelaty*.⁴ Milton's church would have been

under a democratic government and would have recognized the priestly character inherent in all men. There would have been pastors and lay elders elected by the congregation. Its parochial and general assemblies would have based the power of presbyter and deacon upon consent of the body of believers. The Presbyterian Establishment of Scotland, when purified of tyranny, would afford a model, it seemed to Milton, for that discipline which, alone, could bring perfection.

His readers should know, he thought, what manner of man it was who advanced ideas of such magnitude. He told them of the desire of his parents that he should have been consecrated to the service of the Church and of how, when the time had come, he found he could not take the oaths demanded. He had been "church-outed" by the prelates and so prelacy was his very personal concern. Perhaps, it would have been better not to have advanced this claim. Milton, in order to receive his degrees, had twice taken oaths which did not accord with his true beliefs. He argued against the prelates because they seemed to him hateful and inimical to the good of England, not that they had deprived him of donning tied gown and saracenet.

By their violent and indirect counsels, they had misled the King. Milton likened Charles to Samson, the prelates to Delilah. He wondered how, after their treachery, they had the effrontery to proclaim the truth that Charles was God's anointed. He wondered how they dared "oil over and besmear" holy unction "with the corrupt and putrid ointment of their base flatteries." He warns the Parliament against Bishops and warns dissenters not to let themselves be "jiggled out of their beliefs" by the vain mist of words by which the prelates sought to unsteady them.

The rebellious Irish, who were seeking to overthrow English rule and restore the Roman Church, were alike chargeable to the Bishops,—“the cursed offspring of their own connivance.” The Irish had become enemies of God and of mankind, due to the little care that had been taken of their souls. Rebellion there,

he fondly imagined, could be scotched by reformation in the Established Church. Meantime, he subscribed more than did any of his neighbors to the relief of the Irish Protestants.

His invectives grew tiresome to himself, and lest his readers nod, again he covenanted for the future. He had not enjoyed embarking on a troubled sea of noises and disputes. He would have preferred beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies. But if service to his faith obliged him to club quotations with the prelates, he was confident that in his later years his life would be touched and purified by seraph messengers, bringing the hallowed fire of God's own altar. There is need of reassurance. His readers must have felt, at times, that only by such a miracle could his sulphurous mouth be cleansed. The work that he attempted was a noble work, the purification of the Christian Church, but his methods were often ignoble and the plea that he had to oppose the weapons of his enemies with weapons similar is not worthy of one who believed himself to be the consecrated champion of a nation.

The answer to Milton's *Animadversions* was written by the son of Bishop Hall, perhaps because the Bishop himself did not wish to brandish those weapons he was willing that his son should use. This *Modest Confutation*⁵ attempts to turn Milton's scorching phrases against their writer by charging that they could have been learned only in playhouses and bordelloes. In further vilification, it claimed that Milton had been vomited forth from Cambridge because of riotous living.

Milton's subsequent Apology for *Spectymnus* was published in May, 1642, the month of Bishop Hall's release from the Tower. In the belief that the pamphlet was the work, not only of Hall's son, but of the Bishop himself, Milton belabors his composite antagonist as a viper and a fool, a cloistered lubber and a losel Bachelor of Art. The prelates, Milton claimed, had by erecting a high, fenced altar, made a playhouse of the very Church. Milton, who had aspired to build of his own life a Doric temple,

stoops to the pig-sty for mud to throw at his enemy. Such writing was enjoyed by the Parliament men, who were angered at the protests of Hall, the Archbishop of York, and several others, who had been prevented by mobs from entering Westminster and participating in debates.

The autobiographic passages, in which Milton defends himself from unjust charges, are written holily in lucent contrast to his fetid abuse of his opponent. By his own dictum, he provides the touchstone by which the reader holds to these passages as true and condemns the others as false: studied discourse, Milton maintains, is never needed by one who would with dearest charity infuse the knowledge of good things. For such a one words will, like nimble, airy servitors, trip at his command and in well ordered files, according to his wish, fall aptly in their proper places.

From a political standpoint, the most notable passage in the pamphlet is that discussing sovereignty. Milton declares that Christian sovereignty is by law and to no other end than the maintenance of the public good. Whereas before, he had warned Charles that history showed prelates to have been more loyal to the Church than to the King, he now warns the populace that the prelates, by their zeal for the King, would exalt an arbitrary sway, according to private will, and so place over England a tyrant, not a sovereign. He strives to stir the King to his duties as Defender of the Faith: the just distribution of taxes for the maintenance of the Church, the provision of plentiful and diligent preaching throughout the kingdom and the weeding out of the corruption sown by Bishops. The brevity of this appeal and the extended length of the eulogy of Parliament make it appear that he put much greater trust in that body than in the King.

He is groping, and blindly eager to give to some tangible object the same high praise he gives to abstract principles. He is compact of superlatives and his exaltation in one day of what he

might decry the next provides fair game for the controversialists. Milton, at this time, viewed the members of the Long Parliament as demigods, sitting among daily petitions and public thanks, and judged that the Deity, himself, worked for the performance and perfecting of their wills and endeavors. He urges that with such guidance they complete the reformation of the Church.

The answer to Bishop Hall was seconded by the same Smectymnus that had initiated the controversy. *A Vindication of the Answer to a Humble Remonstrance*,⁶ lacking the venomous vigor of Milton's pamphlet and its starlit eloquence, bristles with the names of theologians and seeks, by staunch array of authorities, to put to rout the erring prelates. The five men who were Smectymnus tell of a defense of their first pamphlet which has been tendered them and which they have refused to include in their present argument, because it reflected so deeply upon Dr. Hall. Perhaps, it was Milton who had offered this assistance and being denied, had published for himself.

The Humble Remonstrant's response was *A Short Answer to the Tedious Vindication of Smectymnus*. He protests that he has been meek and peaceable but that Smectymnus, a strange generation of men, has flown in his face and charged him with wrongful abuse. He pays court to the members of Parliament as patrons of peace and truth, who could with their wisdom relieve the Church and rid the realm of all dissension. This pamphlet secured for the Bishops the last word in the controversy, but what was remembered was the vigor and virulence of Milton's attacks.

For his pamphlets, he had sought for metaphors from distempered bodies, the evils of prostitution and of loathsome plagues, stooping as often to what was disgusting as to what was shocking. Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, though they had been fathers of the Church and martyrs, had been bishops and so were vilified. Even the beneficence of Milton's purpose is not sufficient

to merit forgiveness for the malevolence and gutter-filth of his speech. He claims that, of mere necessity, he speaks out plainly and roundly. Rather, he seems to have distorted his arguments and grossly magnified the faults of his adversaries that he might the more rabidly indulge his genius for foul metaphors. The power of the pamphlets, no one can deny. For their blackness is illumined with lofty thoughts and noble images. Nature, history, the classics and the sciences are beckoned out by this urgent master of the arts and gladly yield him tribute. Sometimes, he twists their gifts, bends and compresses them to the uses of a metaphysician, as though to show how completely he possessed them, with what intellectual daring he could use them. And sometimes, by a shocking reversion to gross metaphor, he suggests that he regards his beautiful words and the thoughts that lie behind them and the skill of his metaphysical conceits as servants in his cause of no more value than the odious language of his hate. Milton believed that God had bidden him to take his trumpet and blow a loud, shrill blast, and he had not forborne.

The controversy⁷ had grown tedious. In the course of the quarrel over the discipline of the Church, the Bishops had been excluded from the Lords, the Queen had fled to Holland and the King had gone to York and drawn to him those members of the Parliament who thought that the preservation of his prerogatives was less dangerous to freedom than the assumption of power by the august Houses from which they had seceded. Freed from these dissidents, Parliament, by issuing ordinances for the militia,⁸ had assumed sovereign power. With England so distraught, it was impossible, for the time, to quell the dangerous rebellion in Ireland.⁹ That during these tempestuous times the grievance of episcopal government was not lost sight of is proved by an abundance of pamphlets and petitions addressed to Parliament. Of the latter, one bore the signatures of 1,500 esquires, gentlemen, and yeomen from the single county of Nottingham.¹⁰ So stood the struggle in May of 1642.

In his pretty garden house in Aldersgate Street, Milton wrote his scourging pamphlets and taught his nephews to scan Greek and Latin poets. Edward and John, in time, were joined by the young Earl of Barrymore and other reluctant scions of great houses, whose elders held the scholarship of Milton in esteem. The boys thought him severe.¹¹ They could not forget his harsh discipline when, the lessons over, he wished to talk familiarly. Their schoolmaster had a genteel sword, which when he went abroad, he buckled to his side. He wore his hair in ringlets, but for all that he was a Roundhead. At Nottingham, King Charles had raised the royal standard. To be of Rupert's cavalry was the desire of half the youngsters of the kingdom. At Northampton, were rallied the armed forces of the supporters of the Parliament. And, again, war came to England. It is all but impossible not to compare the pamphleteer of Aldersgate Street with some gay cavalier.

The King's man touches our story lightly but this may be said of him: he took life at a gallop, its hates, its loves, its adventures, and at the end he doffed his hat to death with the same low bow and touch of plume to earth with which he greeted his lady in May time. He had no care for curious introspection but he was sure, none the less, that God fought on the side of King Charles, and *that* through the gentlemen of England. He had songs and humor, but no clarion tongue for disputation, and scribes do not beguile posterity with their paid pleading. He would not read the tracts of Milton. They might coil and uncoil their finely articulated sentences, they might hiss and sting with passion without the least regard from him. Their extravagance repelled his cool, good breeding. The issues of the struggle, he well knew, went deeper than the question of discipline of the Church of England by Bishops. He fought for the preservation of that government which his fathers had labored to evolve. Irresponsible though he seemed, he felt that he represented the traditions of England, and that the fates ordained these should survive. And

so he could meet his own defeat with a jest or a smile or the careless curse of one who suffers some slight accident.

Against such men, the squires of England saw they must improve their forces. They could not oppose poor tapsters and town apprentices to men of honor. Cromwell told Hampden that they must have soldiers fired with religion. He seized the silver plate of the University of Cambridge to swell the funds that Parliament should pay for an army of iron. And those that followed him were taught to oppose to song and laughter, psalms sung, not musically, but with such fervor that those who sang them would believe themselves to be the army of the Lord. Not at once could a crusading spirit penetrate the dull mass of the parliamentary forces. Many fought for bread and drink and booty and believed their masters only fought for better bread and drink and for the breaking down of social cordons. Rupert's men advanced towards London. At Brentford, a few scant miles from the capital, they defeated a parliamentary army and pillaged and sacked the town. The Londoners dug trenches and erected earth-works. Chains were forged to bar the narrow streets from cavalry attacks and raw recruits were drilled unceasingly.

Milton's house in Aldersgate Street was outside the ramparts of the city. He could have abandoned it and clucked his little brood of students within the walls, but there is no record that he did so. What does remain is a treasured sonnet now at Cambridge. Its title is *When the Assault was Intended on the City*. This Ms. shows a line drawn through the alternative: *On his Door When the City Expected an Assault*. Had Captain or colonel or knight at arms read this, he would have known the place was tenanted by a waiting poet who offered, for such protection as Alexander had accorded Pindar, a meed of praise which would o'erspread the land and sea with fame of his gracious savior. So just in scansion is this sonnet, so apt in diction, that its composition must have occupied some time.

Probably, it was never affixed to Milton's door, since the city

was not actually besieged. It may, however, have served as Milton's reserve ammunition, for it is not probable that, the danger past, he would have petitioned a Cavalier commander with such proud promises. One wonders whether there may have been in Milton, as there is in many men who do brave deeds, a streak of cowardice. This sonnet, which through pride of beauty he did not destroy, the fury of his pamphlets and the ardor that he later showed in paper warfare of angelic hosts suggests fear and self-erected barricades to fend off recognition of such fear by self. And then Milton shows such tender care to picture himself to his readers as a valorous gentleman, expert in sword play and all manly exercises!

He esteemed himself best able to serve his country by his pen. Trial by battle was not to be his portion. The remnants of Essex's army, which Rupert had defeated at Edgehill, succeeded in reaching London and in supporting the trained bands with their eight thousand volunteers.¹² At Turnham Green, twenty-four thousand men were drawn up under parliamentary colors. They advanced no farther, and Rupert's smaller forces, for lack of ammunition, dared not attack. *The Perfect Diurnall of the Passages in Parliament*¹³ records that the House sat in extraordinary session because of the grave danger, and that at Guildhall a committee of its members remained with the Lord Mayor to arrange for the provisioning of the army. On the evening of November 13, Charles ordered a retreat. London rejoiced and the joy was greater when it was learned that the autumn campaign had ended. The Royalist forces established winter quarters at loyal Oxford.

The City of London began erecting a system of barricades which would surround the suburbs with a twelve-mile circuit. Parliament strengthened its defenses, also, by binding its adherents into an International League and Covenant. To this, John Milton willingly subscribed.

In January of 1643, by parliamentary enactment, the Episcopal

Establishment was utterly abolished. Puritans rejoiced that religion was freed from the coils of its oppressors. Those Bishops, whom Milton claimed had once church-outed him, were now church-outed by the Parliament. That beneficent freedom, which, it seemed, the Church had gained, he hoped would be extended to all men and to all institutions.

CHAPTER VII

CHAMPION OF DIVORCE

AFTER the rout of the King's army at Edgehill, Charles established himself at Oxford in late October of 1642. According to one's viewpoint, the University was famous or infamous for its loyalty to Church and State. Recruits from the Welsh and Scottish borders and from the southwest found their roads to the King's standards impeded by hostile forces, but the military advisers of the King believed that other considerations outweighed this disadvantage. Fresh earth-works in advance of the old walls of Oxford made the place easily defensible.

And it was near to London. There were many in the capital who favored Charles. Reports of the crude greenness of the city's defenders were pleasantly encouraging. Apprentices, drilled by Protestant officers from Holland and from Sweden, formed striking contrast to the Cavaliers. London would be readily accessible to news of Rupert's dashing raiders. The King's Mercuries, as well as his army, arsenal and Court, were established at the University. The news there published was designed rather for London than for town and gowns of Oxford. The newsbooks of the King went often in disguise and bore a London date line. Smuggled into the City, it was hoped that they would flutter with fears the hearts of doubters, encourage hidden Royalists and waken, perhaps, a dormant loyalty in the indifferent. So might the inmost walls of the capital be breached before attack was made upon its earth-works and its suburbs, London versus Oxford! Another quota of events was to make of the Thames a liquid history.

Of these considerations, the merchants of Oxford and its country squires knew very little. They lived—and happily—within the

moment. They partook of the benefits of royal prodigality; they gaped at the sprightly beauty of the maids of honor, recounted jests of courtiers and speculated only sparingly upon the fortunes of the war.

At Forest Hill near Oxford there lived, on former abbey lands, a Royalist squire and justice of the peace,¹ who sent his eldest sons to Oxford, read *Mercurius Aulicus*² and judged the times thereby. In the summer of 1643, the presence of the Court and all its hangers-on insured the sale of whatsoever his careless industry might produce. There was employment for his wain and his carts, if he chose to have them filled, and, under his wife's direction, his cheesehouse yielded a pretty revenue. Richard Powell more often used his coaches than his wagons. He liked to visit in the neighborhood and to entertain his friends and kinsfolk, and Forest Hill was thought a pleasant place for entertainment.

His daughter, Mary, was teased and petted by her brothers and flattered by young Royalists, who found her modesty and country charms a pleasant contrast to the coquetry and exactions of ladies of the Court. On occasion, her father worried somewhat over a debt of £500 which he had contracted to John Milton, when that gentleman was in his third year at Cambridge. Powell had paid interest sometimes and sometimes he had skipped his payments, hoping that his young creditor would remember the friendship of their families and be lenient.³ The presence of the Court at Oxford did not conduce to parsimony and Richard Powell had contracted other obligations.

In June of 1643, the matter of the debt brought to Forest Hill a visitor of a kind to which the merry house was unaccustomed. Though his dress was sober, it was fastidious and his face was gravely beautiful. He wore his long hair roached high at one side of the forehead, so that it fell over a Puritan collar to curl on the opulent folds of heavy silk below. His chin was dimpled and the upper lip of his firm mouth was bowed. The aquiline nose and the deep eyes showed suffering, or so the young artist, William

Dobson, has painted them. Mary Powell liked the lower part of the face. Any maiden would have. She rather feared the intensity of the eyes and she feared their frequent weariness. Perhaps, she contrasted this pale scholar of London with her ruddy, round-faced father. Richard Powell had gray hair and a little beard; ⁴ he was full set and of middle stature. One knew what life would be under his roof-tree.

Whether by him or by John Milton's father, a marriage had been prearranged, or how it chanced, there is no way of knowing, but though Milton failed to collect the £500 that Richard Powell owed him, he left within the month with Mary as his wife and the promise of a £1,000 as dowry. Some of her nearest kinsfolk came with her to London. For a time, there was feasting and merry-making at the house in Aldersgate Street and then the two were left alone. Mary learned, so Edward Phillips tells us, what it was to lead a "philosophical life" under the appraising vision of one who believed that woman had been created with the sole function of ministering to man, and that from the less favored sex he was entitled to a companion of supreme virtues because of his unique abilities. In such philosophy, she had not been instructed at Forest Hill.

References in Milton's writings have been construed to imply that Mary had not even been instructed in the duties of a bride and that the marriage was not truly consummated.⁵ Milton admits that, because of his chaste ignorance, he could not be a ready teacher. However this may have been, lack of communication of the body was to him less a grievance than lack of communication of the spirit. Mary Powell knew less of Greek and Latin than Milton's most sluggish pupil. She was indifferent to the disastrous effects of the Episcopal Establishment. To list what other matters she was ignorant of would be as tedious as it would be ungracious.

Those things she knew seemed to Milton of small account. She was unhappy and made no effort to hide her wretchedness.

And she seemed always present, for Milton's teaching and studying kept him within doors. She did not like to hear the crying of his nephews when they were beaten. He did not like to be chidden by her silence. Nor did he care to hear her stories of the plight of the Queen at Oxford and the bravery of Rupert's men. Two opinions are not well on the same bolster, saith John Aubrey. Milton found his wife more notably a Royalist in Aldersgate Street than at Oxford. He wrote and he read, and he read and he wrote, and Mary thought of Forest Hill. Then her family solicited that she be allowed to return and stay with them till Michaelmas. Milton assented and bade his wife a grave adieu.

His elder nephew states that Mary had remained a month in London and that it was not until she had refused to return at the appointed time and had treated Milton's letters and messengers with disrespect that the husband wrote the first of his tracts in advocacy of divorce. The nephew's statements seem inaccurate. The pamphlet bears the date of August 1, 1643, a month before the feast of Michaelmas. The date is not printed but is in the handwriting of George Thomason, bookseller of the Rose and Crown in St. Paul's Church Yard, and Milton's friend. In 1641, Thomason began the gathering of the thousands of contemporary pamphlets which now enrich the British Museum.⁶ It was his custom to write on the title page of each the date when the pamphlet had come into his possession or, in some instances, the date of its publication. Sometimes, he dated five or six such title pages on the same day and then, after an interval of a few days, dated a half dozen more.

According to this evidence, Milton's tract was published later than August 1, 1643. Since *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* could not have been written rapidly, Mary either left her husband in much less than a month's time or Milton was engaged in writing his attack upon the marriage laws while his young bride was still within the house. The first supposition is the more credible and is borne out by his earliest biographer, who says that

Mary was so ill pleased with his reserved manner of living that she left him within a few days.

The humiliating knowledge that the dissatisfaction which tormented him was reciprocated in equal measure by his wife imparted a peculiar bitterness to the pamphlets which were the early fruitage of marriage. Milton had married in haste. He had speedily come to believe that one should "divorce at pleasure." His very present experience coincided in time with the sessions of a National Synod in convention at Westminster to consider changes in doctrine and discipline. The occasion was opportune for the publication of his teeming opinions. He had pled for religious liberty. In *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* he begins his plea for domestic liberty. For the achievement of the latter, he considered of prime importance a less galling adjustment of the marriage yoke. He wrote at a time when there were many Lysistratas, for families were riven with political dissensions. It was an odd, distracted time, which John Taylor said should have as its emblems rabbits chasing dogs, rats treeing cats, wheelbarrows pushing men, fish flying and churches standing on their steeples.⁷ Milton found that men stayed at home to care for the children, the while their wives raged against them in the opposition camp. England had traveled very rapidly away from that Hebraic conception of women, which seemed to him the just one.

In his commonplace book, there was added a new section: *de Divortio*. What remedy there was for a man ill yoked in matrimony, he sought for in the Scriptures and in the writings of Grotius and Beza. That a true marriage in itself was no defilement, even for a priest, he had determined by his studies of marriage among the apostles and the Fathers of the Church. His notes on *Matrimonium* quote Justin Martyr's statement that the Jews countenanced even polygamy and Sir Walter Raleigh's observation that a rigorous prohibition of this practice had caused the downfall of the kingdom of the Congo.

The benefit of speedy separation, he had been accorded by Mary, herself, but Milton, as his earliest biographer reminds us, was in the full vigor of his manhood. "He thought upon a divorce that he might be free to marry another." In England at that time, the ecclesiastical courts had the right to grant separations or divorce, *a mensa et thoro*, with the provision that there should be no second marriage. Absolute divorce could be had only by a special act of Parliament, the cost of which was prohibitive to all except those of great wealth. Milton wished the Westminster Assembly and the civil legislators to make divorce easy of attainment. For them and for himself, he had to prove that this was expedient, not only for the relief of mankind, but for the observance of the highest code of morals. Else Milton, as champion of divorce, could not make of his life "a true poem."

There was no matter which Parliament and Assembly, at this time, were so desirous of leaving untouched. The charge was rife among the Cavaliers that the same ardor which made the Roundheads revolutionary in their political demands and perfervid in religious protestations made them burn to bend the moral laws to supple laxity. "Hot Gospellers," they said were loose livers. To rake over the question of divorce would give the Roman Catholics on the Continent another chance to point out parallelism in the wish for churchly reform and the wish for a looser code regarding matrimony. Those Presbyterian divines in the Assembly, who had welcomed Milton's attack on the Bishops, now wished for him less eloquence. He trenched upon affairs of which they desired sole jurisdiction. They could not tolerate John Milton's claim that marriage was a civil contract, not a sacrament.

In accordance with a parliamentary decree of June, 1643, licensers had been appointed and the Master and Wardens of the Company of Stationers had been authorized to confiscate all that was published without authority and without due entry in their Register.⁸ To the clerk of the Stationers' Company was given

the task of licensing pamphlets. *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*⁹ appeared with neither signature nor license. Revised and dignified with an admonitory address to Parliament, it was reprinted in February of 1644, months after Michaelmas had passed, and while Mary still was absent. This opus Milton signed, but printed without license, flouting again that Parliament to which he addressed his pamphlet. Its very sale was illicit. On October 9, 1643, the vending of unlicensed pamphlets, libels and news-books had been forbidden in the streets of London and the Liberties. Offenders were to be punished as rogues and vagabonds.¹⁰

Since Milton's pamphlet was designed particularly for the instruction of the English, it was written in his mother tongue. He confesses that, "without the spur of self concernment," men are cold and dull to the wrongs and burdens of their brethren. His warmth, even were the facts of his life not known, would show how galled he was by this same spur. Milton, who had trafficked in words with the loves of gods and goddesses had known the flesh of little Mary Powell. The natural revulsion that often follows carnal communication was, in him, intensified by the clash of reality with a superardent imagination. "No man knows hell like him who converses most in heaven." He would have saved his countrymen from such descent and "with one gentle stroking" have wiped away the thousand tears out of the life of man. Too strict a discipline in matrimony rushed men to whoredoms and adulteries. There should be shown a conscionable and tender pity to those who had unwarily made themselves the bondmen of a luckless and helpless matrimony. The law of Moses had permitted other causes than that of adultery for the severance of the marriage tie. Adultery referred not only to the carnal straying of the body but to the corruption of the mind.

Marriage was ordained for the refreshment of man by woman. Generation was only its secondary purpose. When man failed to receive refreshment, the marriage tie should be dissolved. His claim was that

indisposition, unfitness or contrariety of mind, arising from a cause in nature unchangeable, hindering and ever likely to hinder the main benefits of conjugal society, which are solace and peace, is a greater reason of divorce than natural frigidity, especially if there be no children and there be mutual consent.

Not to be beloved and yet retained, he esteemed the greatest injury to a gentle spirit. What justice was there in requiring lip bondage to an "uncomplying discord of nature" or to an "image of earth and phlegm"? It would make even the strongest Christians, despairing of virtue, mutiny against Divine Providence. God, who hated hypocrisy could take no pleasure in the preservation of a husk of matrimony where love was not. How could one perform his duties to God and man, were he thrall to a mute and spiritless mate? She who was no "meet help" was clearly not a wife and so should be dismissed. There should be no restraint of lawful liberty. Law should not covenant with sin.

To part, with wise and quiet consent, he contended, is a less breach of wedlock than to live still together and profane the mysteries of union: "The freedom and eminence of man's creation gives him to be a law in this matter to himself, being the head of the other sex, which was made for him." Besides, it seemed an affront to the sequestered and veiled modesty of women to permit "hired masters of tongue fence" to bandy in open court their "unpleasingness and other concealments." If, perchance, the man divorces unjustly, it should be esteemed a happiness on the woman's part to be freed from such a partner. Divorce should be granted on the duly witnessed oath of the husband that for an unchangeable cause of nature his marriage has been such that Christ's prohibitions would not be violated by its dissolution. Questions regarding jointures, dowries and the like, and the punishing of adultery should be settled by the magistrate, but divorce should not be their province. Where hatred is, "though wedlock try all her golden links, and borrow

to her aid all the iron manacles and fetters of law, it does but seek to twist a rope of sand."

The fact that Milton believed at this time that the Scriptures did not justify men in rebelling against magistrates, even though these might be tyrannical, whetted the zeal with which he urged his thesis. He wished an utter change in laws regarding matrimony,—no quibbling exemptions for particular cases. If there were granted "politic dispensations of lewd uncleanness," there would follow the toleration of "epidemic whoredom." Honest liberty should be opposed to dishonest license. To buttress the eloquence of his plea for freedom, he cites the authority of political philosophers, the exigencies of natural law, and wrests Scripture to his purpose. It was no every day's work he was engaged in, but the dissolving of tedious and Gordian difficulties for the "unspeakable good of Christendom." There was no tyranny so heavy as the household unhappiness of a family.

While the evil of reluctant marriage lasted, there could be no freedom from the bondage of superstition, no true reformation in the state. England's duty was, not only to purge herself of evils, but to forward the work of Reformation for the enlightenment of Europe.

Throbbing through the discord of this tortured pleading, there sounds a marriage hymn to celebrate such joy as Milton had not found. It is faint and tenuous, as though coming from far away, and few who read John Milton's pamphlet heard its melody.

The first edition sold but slowly and was not exhausted when the revised one appeared some six months later. London preferred to read of events, rather than projects for reform. And Milton's heavily studded prose was written, admittedly, for the learned and the choice. The population, whose marital woes disturbed John Milton, laughed over the broadsides that joked of Prince Rupert's dog and his black monkey. They discussed the newsbooks,—the different versions of events as narrated by *Mercurius Civicus*, *Mercurius Britannicus*, and the Oxford *Mercurius*

Aulicus. They chuckled at the pranks of *Mercurius Aquaticus*, sampled the wares of the ballad-mongers and went their ways. The number of "scandalous and lying tracts" had grown so great that early in 1644 the government made an effort to imprison their printers and destroy their presses. The result of this and the enforcement of the ordinance of the preceding October was a great increase in the number of applications to the licensers.

When Milton, brooding still upon his loneliness, had yet another pamphlet¹¹ ready for the press, he found the printers timorous. They recognized it as a challenge to the Westminster Assembly, although the body of the work was merely a translation. He had chosen to call the attention of his countrymen to the second book of *The Kingdom of Christ*, by Martin Bucer, a German Protestant, whom Edward VI had placed at Cambridge. Bucer's judgment as to divorce was in direct confirmation of the claim that Milton had made in his earlier pamphlet.

With this authoritative reinforcement, Milton dedicated his translation to Parliament with a Biblical challenge, designed, perhaps, more for the Assembly: "Art thou a teacher in Israel and knowest not these things?" Parliament was exhorted to make of England an example of perfected reformation for the inspiration of all Christendom. Its members were accounted the servants of Providence and so, free from the binding force of petty precedents. The age was perverse. There were those who pretended to freedom and yet were prostrate worshipers of custom. Reforms within the house and home should be the foundation of the great edifice of state the noble Parliament should now erect. He pledged support. He would pursue his advocacy of those reforms in which he could best serve his age or, belike, posterity. He suggested that Parliament would need such support. He aspired to be a passive instrument under some power and counsel, higher and better than could be human, working toward a general good.

In his postscript to the translation, he complains that he is finding difficulty in bringing his work before the public. If the permission to publish is not to be granted, he refers his cause to wisest men, "whether truth be suffered to be truth or liberty to be liberty" and whether there be not danger of new fetters and captivity and shipwreck of hopes and labor, whether learning be not in the way to be trodden down again by ignorance. He begs that the kingdom beware, that the members of Parliament inform themselves rightly in the midst of an unprincipled age and fend off that ecclesiastical thralldom, which under new shapes and disguises had begun afresh its growth.

To this exordium and denunciation, Milton signed his name. He succeeded in procuring a license and Matthew Simmons undertook the printing. Thomason has dated the pamphlet August 6, 1644. Those presbyters of the Westminster Assembly, who, themselves, aspired to chart the course of Parliament were angered at Milton's daring assumption of leadership. They chafed at the condemnation, of which they rightly recognized themselves the objectives, and they were aghast at Milton's conception of matrimony. The Westminster Assembly denounced John Milton's insolence and his sectary beliefs to Parliament. They asked for censure, also, on the five dissenting members of the Westminster Assembly, whose plea for religious toleration had been presented in *The Apologetical Narration*. They inveighed likewise against Roger Williams, whose *Bloody Tenet of Persecution for Causes of Conscience* condemned forced unity.¹² Roger Williams had by this time reached America with a charter for the colony he had founded.

Oliver Cromwell was becoming very weary of the demands of the Presbyterians. Milton's praise of Parliament had been extravagant and inspiringly beautiful. A motion for censure was not forthcoming.

On the thirteenth of August, it being a day of humiliation, the members of both Houses attended the services in St. Margaret's,

Westminster, and were sermonized by Herbert Palmer, who held before them "The Glass of God's Providence towards his Faithful Ones."¹³ Palmer was a Presbyterian of Queen's College, Cambridge. He was alarmed at the pleas for "ungodly toleration," which were made under the pretense of a desire for liberty of conscience. Milton's books should be burned, he contended. It was shameful that Parliament had shown no sign of displeasure. Opposite the pulpit where he thundered, today a window softly glows in Milton's memory.

The invectives of the Assembly against the "blasphemous and seditious" pamphlets, which were so freely circulated, called down criticism on the Master and Wardens of the Stationers' Company. They took council in their Guildhall and decided that the evil ideas were the fruit of the unlicensed pamphlets which were spread abroad without their authority and at their personal loss. They petitioned Parliament against these, naming as a most notorious example Milton's *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. The petition was referred to the Committee on Printing.

A sermon, which on Parliament had produced no effect, a petition shelved in committee, did not solve for the Presbyterians the problem of Milton's punishment. Joseph Caryl, a member of the Westminster Assembly, had the pleasure in November, 1644, of licensing *An Answer to a Book Entitled the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*.¹⁴ Not content with affixing his imprimatur, Caryl printed a paragraph on the fly leaf expressing approval of the effort to preserve the strength and honor of the marriage bond. Its anonymous author attempted throughout forty-four pages to rouse the women against the dangerous, new doctrine. It was scandalous that Milton, who believed in the inferiority of women, should attempt to hold them to a knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, Latin and French, the canon law, and various and sundry subtleties before they could be suitable for marriage. The anonymous author invoked the law and the prophets to show how

unwise and against authority would be divorce for contrariety. What was sauce for the gander should be sauce for the goose and the mere thought of women's being able to divorce at pleasure showed how unthinkable was the thesis that a man should do so. Bishop Hall was another who took up the cudgels against Milton. He expressed amazement at the "licentious pamphlet" thrown abroad for the encouragement of divorce. On the face of it, he had supposed the thing a hoax, but its "too well penned pages" had convinced him of sincerity.

That Milton lagged in writing his answer was not that his opponents had overpersuaded him, but that the controversy had forcibly brought before him those considerations which led to his writing *Areopagitica*. Its unlicensed appearance, ten days after he had been answered by the anonymous pamphleteer of November 14, gave to the champion of divorce a prominence far greater than he had hitherto possessed. The Company of the Stationers were appalled by the money they had lost through the sales of his non-licensed pamphlets and the displeasure they had incurred from the Westminster Assembly. They made protest through two of their Wardens to the House of Lords against his practices. He and Hezekiah Woodward, who was similarly accused, were thereupon summoned to be examined before two justices. Woodward was arrested, examined and released on his own bond, but there is no record to show that Milton was molested even to this extent. However, his name was bruited abroad and the stationers, by their ill will, increased considerably the sale of his pamphlets.

With the coming of the new year, his *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* went into its third edition and Milton was ready to publish its second reënforcement, *Tetrachordon*. Again Parliament was favored with a dedication and again the rights of its licensers were ignored. The title of the pamphlet referred to the four texts Milton used for the building up of his thesis and had, too, a musical connotation, which was merited by the majestic

rhythm of its prose. It was a title, however, which caused the stall readers to stare and wonder and to spell and misspell. It was said that Milton had elected to play upon a fiddle of four strings. In an impatient sonnet, the author tried to justify its name and praised the pamphlet, itself, as "woven close, both matter, form and style."¹⁵

He had thought more deeply upon marriage and was willing to admit that in cases where the woman was more prudent and dexterous, she should, with the man's consent, have priority; for by natural law, the wiser should govern the less wise. But Milton remained Hebraic in his conception of marriage as an institution created primarily for the solace of man. It is man who is fashioned in God's image and woman has God in her only as derived from man. As woman is subservient to man so, too should be the laws. When a man's highest good is disserved by a law, to transgress that law is but to observe a higher one. The prime dictates of nature are more valid than any ordinance, whether human or divine. The end for which marriage was ordained, companionship, is more important than the institution itself. To this so much desired end, conjunction of mind contributes more than conjunction of body. It follows that notable disobedience of a wife, an intractable carriage, love of earthly things, are more damaging to the marriage relation than is adultery. For in adultery "nothing is given from the husband which he misses, or enjoys the less, as it may be subtly given." He recognized, too, that adultery might be committed solely for the procuring of a divorce or might be feigned for such a purpose.

Far better, then, that a divorce be granted on other grounds. It should be granted before children were born into a house of discord. Few of those who knew how to beget children knew how to rear them. If already there were children, before the need for divorce were discerned, they should go with either parent as might be agreed or judged.

Barrenness and frigidity of body, even wantonness, were evils

not so great as coldness and sterility of mind. A wife should be religious and have such spiritual graces and mental riches as would make her a true help-meet to the man. Abilities too great, she should not have, else her energies would be diffused to her husband's lack.

Such a wife Milton, in 1645, believed he might attain. His longing for her, perhaps, accounts for the poignancy of the passage in *Tetrachordon* upon loneliness. It may account also for the threat that, if his eloquence did not induce a timely revision of the law, the law should "bear the censure of the consequence." Some of his daring arguments and the erudition he expended on the proving of his thesis may have been directed towards the "virtuous young lady" of his sonnet, whom he so desired. She was terrified and remained averse to becoming a co-partner in a violation of the law, but that Milton urged her to marriage is attested by his earliest biographer and his nephew, Edward Phillips.

Deserted by his wife and rebuffed by the one he would have made her successor, Milton was solaced by the friendship of the Lady Margaret Lee, a daughter of the Earl of Marlborough who had served as president of the privy council of King James I. This noble and witty gentlewoman showed him particular honor and took much delight in his company, as, also, did her husband. The lady, he has immortalized in a courtly sonnet.

Although in *Tetrachordon*, Milton recorded fear that his doctrine on divorce would receive credence only from posterity, he could not refrain from a fourth attack upon the stubbornness of his own age. The last divorce tract, *Colasterion*,¹⁶ was designed as a punishment to an anonymous reply to his first one. He produced no fresh arguments but, denouncing his antagonist as a pork, a snout and an arrant pettifogger, promised that, if some one of true value would take up the cudgels, he, himself, would employ civility and logic. Milton, in flight, was as an eagle, but an eagle, when it alights, loses the greater part of its mag-

nificence. It walks but awkwardly. The scaly talons and the bald, staring eyes seem cruel. In this tract, Milton's prose has more of commerce with the mundane than with the celestial. Caryl, who had licensed with such fulsome praise the answer of Milton's antagonist, is not forgotten. It is observed that, if licensers are to bring their chairs into the title page and there render judgment, their pockets will grow heavy with the fees of printers and authors, but that the public will be grievously misled.

Opinion, generally, held Milton a more dangerous guide than any licenser. Ephraim Pagitt, a minister of St. Edmunds, Lombard Street, who catalogued the heretics of his time, makes two uncomplimentary references to Milton, as "having published a tractate on divorce in which the bonds of marriage are let loose to inordinate lust," since for mere distaste, it urged that men should put away their wives. Those who followed Milton in this belief, Pagitt calls "Divorcers."¹⁷ *A Free Parliament Litany*, written by some wag of the Cavaliers, prays for deliverance "from the Doctrine and Discipline of now and anon."¹⁸ Robert Baylie, minister of Glasgow, in his *Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time*, cites for his readers extracts from Milton's first pamphlet to prove how full a liberty had been urged,—that any man was to put away his wife, even were she faultless, if only he had for her "dislike or dyspathy of humour." Baylie's section on the Brownists shows that their method of divorce was similar to the one Milton had urged.¹⁹

A broadside against the preaching of "erroneous, heretical and mechanical spirits" lists the heresy that "a man may lawfully put away his wife if she be not a meet helper."²⁰ A parody catalogue of books, that was thrown about in St. Paul's Church Yard, defined *Christian Liberty* as the lawfulness of shifting sides, "as the saints do wives, which if not for their turn, do turn them off and take new ones."²¹ A pamphlet called *A Glass for the Times*²² mentions Miltonists as among the heretics who perplexed society in 1648. *A Catalogue of the General Sects and*

Opinions in England displayed a caricature of the Divorcers,—a man in Puritan dress but with long hair, beating a tearful, ill favored woman.²³ Theodorus Verax, in his contemporary *History of Independency*, goes farthest in stigmatizing Milton as “a libertine that thinketh his wife a manacle and his very garters to be shackles and fetters to him,” one that after the fashion of the Independents would be tied to no obligation to God or man. Royalists carried to Holland their knowledge of the doctrine, so that a translation there of the *Electra* of Sophocles has a reference to the “froward Miltonist,” who would untwist his nuptial knot.²⁴

Milton's two years' advocacy of divorce, on grounds rightly recognized as valid in many courts today, has been obscured by time, the intensity of his interests in other causes and the enduring magnificence of his work in later years. Had his eloquent plea come from a happily married benedict or had it been so persuasive as to have caused Milton, himself, to have forborne the continuance of a loveless marriage, his advocacy would have merited approval. But the two years when Milton pled for divorce were years of loneliness. The belief in his high destiny of priesthood precluded him from carnal intercourse outside the bonds of matrimony, but did not stay him from a reconciliation with the wife who had inspired such loathly images of the unwanted woman.

The defeat of the Royalists at Naseby and the subsequent siege of Oxford by the Parliamentary forces made Milton appear to Richard Powell and his wife a more desirable son-in-law than they had earlier accounted him. Due to their urging and, perhaps, to jealousy of the warm friendships Milton had formed in her absence, his nineteen-year-old wife succeeded, by a ruse, in presenting herself before him in a friendly house and obtaining forgiveness. Critics have fancied they have found references to the reconciliation in that scene in *Paradise Lost* where Eve wins back the love of Adam after the first sin. It is difficult to believe

that the tenderly luminous passages in that great epic refer to Mary Powell. Milton has left no written word of any love for her. However, there were no more pamphlets advocating divorce and to the married Milton was restored that respectability which made it possible, later, for Parliament to take him into its employ.

Mary Powell died at twenty-six, soon after she had given birth to her fourth child in seven years.

CHAPTER VIII

FREE LANCE AND SCHOOLMASTER

IN that aspect of liberty which Milton described as domestic, in distinction from civil and ecclesiastical, he distinguished three problems that had current need for discussion,—that of marriage, that of the education of children and that of free speech. While he was still writing on the first of these, he was persuaded by the flattering urgency of Samuel Hartlib to write upon the second. Hartlib was a Polish philosopher and, himself, had advanced schemes for educational reform and for the establishment of a university in London. For his benefit, Milton's eight-page pamphlet, *Of Education*,¹ made more easily available the plan he had previously developed for him in conversation.

It was of the education of youths from twelve to twenty-one that Milton wrote. He wished to evolve a plan by which he might principle their minds in virtue; for virtue, he held to be "the only source of political and individual liberty, the only true safeguard of states, the bulwark of their prosperity and renown." The idea that the foundation and maintenance of a great state is the prime object of the education of its citizens appears in Milton's definition:

I call a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war.

To this end, both day schools and universities seemed inefficient. He advocated the establishment of municipal academies, each to house one hundred and fifty members and tutors, stu-

dents and attendants, who should live their lives together. Their days should be divided into periods for study, exercise, amusement and diet. Utility was to decide what studies should be taught and to determine their rank. Greek and Latin were to be used as languages for instruction in useful science and art, not as studies in themselves.² English was not to be taught at all, for Milton, albeit he had vaunted the glories of Shakespeare, considered that England's literary greatness lay still in the future. Italian was to be studied in any "odd hour." Hebrew, Chaldee and Syriac were included for religious teaching. In the higher classes, the political sciences were to be studied, but above them were placed logic, rhetoric and poetics, as exacting more maturity for their understanding. From these, the students were to learn the proper use of poetry and the offensiveness of those rhymsters and playwrights who debased it. Very late in the curriculum there should be practice in oral and written composition for the training of ministers and parliamentarians.

Military drills, cavalry practice, fencing and wrestling should serve for amusement and exercise. After these and after simple, wholesome dining, there should be music. There were to be plays, but of prudent selection. The greatest of the Attic tragedies were to be reserved until the latest years. Milton's scholars were not to be cloistered. Men of many ranks of life should give them occasional instruction: hunters, fowlers, mariners, architects, gardeners and apothecaries. He advised that with thoughtful guides, the students should make horseback excursions over all of England. These would provide that diversity of interest which would obviate the need of long vacations. And at the end, the work of the Academy should be completed by foreign travel.

The scheme, coming from one who was at that very time a schoolmaster, shows an engaging faith in the possibilities of human achievement. His students at Aldersgate Street learned those foreign languages he recommended to Hartlib,—used them as tools for the acquisition of knowledge. His nephews both be-

came writers, but much that they wrote seemed shameful to John Milton. He knew how difficult it was to inspire any great care for scholarship in his pupils, Lord Barrymore and Sir Thomas Gardiner of Essex, but this did not prevent him from wishing to give to youth a richer training than might be gained through the obsolete and enfeebling methods of the universities. His bow was not for every man that accounted himself a teacher. It would require the sinews of Ulysses for its stretching,—Miltons for teachers and, certainly, also, Miltons for students. The reading of Cato for instruction in agricultural methods and Pliny for instruction in the physical sciences would have exacted much from the commentator and much from the student who wished to make those authors of practical utility to England of the seventeenth century. Of the whole scheme, it may be said that never was so ambitious an undertaking bruited in such scant space by a great man. In his self-confidence and disregard of difficulty Milton was either Olympian or youthful,—perhaps they are the same. He could turn aside from his struggle with law and custom over the question of divorce to lay out in eight pages the path to a true and noble education.

Another divagation from the struggle to attain conjugal happiness was more truly godlike. Milton's indignation at the insults he had suffered from the licensers and at the stealthy sale by which his unlicensed pamphlets had to reach the public, resulted in a defense and accusation so luminous as to shine for all time as a beacon to free speech. Twopenny trash was approved by starveling clerks of puny minds and appeared "By Authority." Milton, who believed that he was charged by God, Himself, to speak to the English people, whom still He held in special care, did not choose to publish by such insignificant authority.³ Nor did he wish to contravene the law, to have his pamphlets hounded through the streets and himself haled before the magistrates. What was not good for Milton, again it seemed to him was ill for humankind. And since he was an idealist—one of

those who attempts at the wrong time and by the wrong methods to attain the right end, he wrote *Areopagitica*,⁴ thinking he could give to the England of Laud and Prynne and Cromwell, God's gift of a free tongue. This the Presbyterians, who were in power, did not desire, and a cause pled by an advocate of divorce was a cause lost.

But Milton's plea was not to them alone. He has described *Areopagitica* as a speech, and surely the written words have taken voice and sounded through the ages. The famous tract is dedicated to Parliament and has as model that discourse wherein Isocrates urged upon the Athenian Areopagus those reforms that he considered necessary. Milton, magnifying the achievements of the English Parliament, covenants that he will show his fidelity, not alone by praise, but by reminding them of what they can do better. Specifically, they should rejudge that law they had enacted in June of 1643, whereby printing was made permissible only on the approval of duly appointed licensers. For God trusts man with the gift of reason that he may be his own chooser. This reason, if it is to be healthy, has need of exercise like the limbs of the body. A sickly reason cannot confute the arguments that will appear for evil, maugre the censorship.

Briefly, the pamphlet strives to prove that no twenty men could be safely delegated with the power to determine what should and what should not be printed in England; that if men existed so renowned in learning as to have valid judgment on all books that waited publication, they should not have for their dull portion an interminable work of reading. Nor could the state induce such men to take the office. They would not consent to be cribbed in a censorship. Some who served as licensers, did so reluctantly, believing that they could not well refuse a duty Parliament had assigned them. Others were men of the Gospel, who gained the salary for two offices, when they had not the wit to perform one.

For the protection of property rights, books should bear the

name of the author, certainly that of the publisher. (The *Areopagitica*, itself, lacked the latter.) But no book should be denied of making its appearance. Men should be allowed to publish and stand to the hazard of law and penalty. Milton's experience in Italy had taught him that censorship of the press did not enfeeble the circulation of what was evil but did emasculate the production of what was good. While on the piazza of the title page, imprimaturs ducked and scraped and reckoned whether it were well to allow the poor author access to the public, the author wearied. If changes seemed to be desirable, they were not made, for he could not endure again to stand lackey at the pleasure of the censors.

If censorship of books conduced to the growth of virtue, it must be remembered that life, itself, was but a book. All that men saw and felt and heard in this great book could not be censored. If every action were state-prescribed or compelled, virtue would become only a name and be unworthy praise. What gramercy, then, to be sober, just or continent? The province of the state was to govern, not to criticize. Its citizens had been gifted by God with reason,—the ability to choose. Men could grow in reason only as they were given the opportunity to use their reason. For men of right intent, the reading of an evil book afforded no danger, but the ability "to discover, to confute, to forewarn, to illustrate." To those who were evil, good books could be distorted by a foul interpretation. Truth and understanding were not such wares as could be monopolized and traded in by tickets, statutes and standards.

What has given to *Areopagitica* its eagle flight is not its condemnation of an unjust law. Milton in many pamphlets has shown himself more vigorous in vituperation. It is praise that wings it over Milton's other prose and sends it soaring in a deathless flight; praise of good books, the life-blood of master spirits, embalmed and treasured up to a life beyond life; praise of truth, that would prevail, though all the winds of doctrine

were loosed to play upon the earth,—truth that needed no policies, no stratagems, no licensing to bring her victory; praise of God's wisdom, which had adjudged man capable of finding truth, though knowledge of good and evil were strangely involved and interwoven; praise of liberty,—that liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely, which was above all liberties; praise of the tempestuous city in which he lived,—a city of refuge, the mansion house of liberty, where men mused, searched, revolved new notions and ideas to present the approaching reformation, discarding only that which did not assent with reason and conviction,—that London, fertile in opinion, which was but knowledge in the making; praise of England,

a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point, the highest that human capacity can soar to.

If there could be eagle song, it would be not unlike these clarion, ringing tones of Milton's prose.

There are those who claim that the *Areopagitica* had scant effect,—that it did not occasion Parliament to relax the censorship and that the last zealously written book of Milton's religious beliefs had to await the Restoration for its publication; that writers of the time, pleading free speech, seldom availed themselves of Milton's arguments and phrases; that Milton, himself, became a censor later. Such critics go blindly tapping at small trees and do not see the majestic forest in whose gracious shadows we now walk. What is written, is written and, if it gain immortality, no stain of the author's life blots out one tittle of its pristine force. No Englishman can read the *Areopagitica* without seeming to gain in stature in the process and glimpse that England of the future which Milton visioned. And though Milton stumbled and his countrymen have stumbled still in following, so that the vision has seemed sometimes only a lying mirage of individualism, it has yet served to shape roughly the

actualities of the nation, to inspire hatred of its faults and strength for their redressing. In the *Areopagitica* Milton was the shepherd and the prophet he aspired to be.

The Presbyters, who had inherited the power of the Bishops and whom Milton derided in his pamphlet as exercising their power in a manner no less tyrannical—the Presbyters, who were again reducing religion to the convenience of a chaplain, who could be banished or entertained at will, and sought to bring England to a conforming stupidity as deadening to the spirit as Laud's System of Thorough, the Presbyters hated John Milton for this pamphlet. The Master and Wardens and all the Company of Stationers, perplexed at the ribald ballads, and Cavalier newsbooks and the seditious pamphlets of the sectaries petitioned to the Lords against John Milton and lamented that Parliament did not enforce those statutes which it had enacted.

Some licensers and censors, it is true, expressed distaste for their tedious vocation. One asked that he be permitted to resign, urging such reasons as Milton had supplied him with. Authors jestingly wrote their own imprimaturs,—a half dozen to the book for good measure, signing them with the pompous names of nonexistent dignitaries. John Lilburne, whose forthright speech insured for him the popularity that Milton lacked, borrowed the arguments of the *Areopagitica* and even some of its phrasing, so that they soon passed current with the mob.⁵

But who can detail the means by which a masterpiece attains to the fulfillment of its destiny? Who can mark how subtly it passes into the limpid life stream of the race? This pamphlet, written for the English, has appeared in England's colonies,⁶ in France, and Russia in their times of trouble,⁷ and, like some god of the mountain, coming only when there is dire need, has mocked authority and heartened liberty and shall still give its help until its cause is won.

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Detested by the Presbyterians and indifferently regarded by their foes, the Independents, Milton, for a time, desisted from his pamphlet warfare. In September of 1645, he left his Aldersgate residence for a commodious dwelling on Barbican Street. Here, his wife returned to him. He was accompanied, also, by his father, who had remained with the Royalist Christopher until the siege of Reading and now joined himself to Milton. The tutoring of his nephews and the sons of gentry was continued, for the times were so troubled that income from property was not always forthcoming.

From his new home, John Milton watched the struggle. The Presbyters of the Westminster Assembly and Sion House had many sympathizers in the House of Commons. Their exorbitant demands exposed them as heirs of the intolerance which Laud had paid for on the scaffold. They were ardently opposed by citizens of London and those men who fought with Cromwell. The pay of the army was in arrears and there was great impatience with the attempted tyranny of members of Parliament, who were lax only in respect to their own verbosity. Cromwell had reminded the Speaker of the House, after the victory of Naseby, that those who ventured their lives for the liberty of their country should be left able to entrust the liberty of their conscience to God, and the maintenance of political liberty to Parliament. The struggle was a bitter one and Milton, while sharing their wish for independence, must have detested some of the proposals of the Independents and many of the scribes who sought to advance their cause.

On Barbican Street, was the town house of the Earl of Bridgewater, for whose entertainment Milton had written *Comus*. It must have served as a reminder of the Horton days. The music that his father brought to the house, and the visits of Henry Lawes secured for Milton a measure of peace. For a time, he refrained from engaging in controversy. No prose pamphlets were published while he lived in Barbican Street. It was not

commonly known in London that the foe of the Bishops and the licensers and the defender of divorce was, also, a poet. The times were too disturbed for the writing and reading of great poetry. Besides, the Muses were suspect as Royalists. What ballads were hummed in the city praised the King and derided Parliament,—gay, valorous, bawdy, the songs of the Cavaliers barely tweaked the lightest string of Apollo's lyre. Whether they rhymed jingling gibes at the doubtful chastity of the "Sisters" or the sanctity of the "Brothers," or taunted at Parliament and Presbyters, Milton held them unworthy of notice. He would stoop to the vilest vituperation to answer in prose the arguments of his opponents, but words cased in the velvet glove of rhyme and rhythm were not for use in controversy.

Those poems he had already written were collected, licensed, registered and published in January of 1646 by a most remarkable publisher. Humphrey Mosely, in his notice to the gentle reader, gave assurance that he published with no hope of gain, since the slightest pamphlet of the day was more vendible than the writing of the learned. He published because of the love he bore the English language. Not those friendly encomiums, which men prefixed to the volume after the fashion of the day, but the worth of the poems, themselves, should be the reason for the purchase of the volume. He was not fearful to expose their beauties, even to those who were most eagle-eyed to seek out imperfections. To Milton's critics, there was flung a quotation from Virgil: that their splenetic tempers should not hurt the poet to be, he should be early laureled. For himself, Mosely was sure he would deserve well of his country for having introduced as true a poet as there had been since Spenser.

The volume was edited by Milton,⁸ the poems dated, and a warning tendered in Greek that the portrait frontispiece, sponsored though it was by Melpomene, Urania, Clio and Erato, was but a lying likeness.

Prefacing *Lycidas*, Milton noted that the monody, by occasion,

foretold the ruin of the corrupted clergy, who, when it had been written were in their height. For thirty years, there was no other burgeoning of those "ever green and not to be blasted laurels," which today can be gathered from any book shop. The edition must have been a small one, for the little volume, fittingly housed today in the library of Guildhall, is a highly treasured rarity. It seems scarcely more remote from the events of busy London than it did when it first appeared in 1646.

The publication of these early poems accounts, perhaps, for the writing of several sonnets in this year. They are sonnets of disillusionment. Milton had forsaken the poetry of his youth to engage in a battle of the books,—sound and fury that now, it seemed, signified nothing. He expressed chagrin at the reception of his pamphlets:

I did but prompt the age to quit their cloggs
By the known rules of ancient libertie,
When strait a barbarous noise environs me
Of Owles and Cuckoos, Asses, Apes and Dogs.

The men for whom he had written and for whom Cromwell fought could not understand the true meaning of liberty. It was only license they had wished for,—license or licensors. The struggle was not worth its waste of wealth and blood.

In a sonnet with a stinging coda, he arraigned the new ecclesiastical hierarchy, the "forcers of conscience," who had shown themselves hot for the "whore, plurality" and so dictatorial that it appeared new presbyter was but old priest writ large. Another sonnet shows him eager for what enjoyment may be interposed in the dull days of England's discontent. In a fourth, he wrote of the earthly load of death called life.

Oxford surrendered in June, and Richard Powell and his family, who had sought shelter within its walls, were refugees. His goods were appraised and sold by the Standing Committee of

Oxford for £335, a sum far less than they were worth. The great bed, vallons laced, green curtained, the horseman's coat with silver buttons, the wrought stools and arras work chair became the property of a certain Matthew Applewhite of London. Powell's fine, as a compounding delinquent, was fixed at £180. Sir Robert Pye, a neighbor and member of the Long Parliament, by foreclosing a mortgage that he held on Forest Hill, made it possible for the Powells to keep their most valuable property in friendly hands. By the articles of surrender, signed at Oxford, Powell should have had the benefit of his real and personal estate for six months after the city's capture and should have been allowed its further enjoyment on payment of his fine as a delinquent.

The injustice that he met with drove him, with his numerous family, to seek refuge in London. On the twenty-seventh of June, under a protection signed by Fairfax, they made their slow way to Milton's house in Barbican Street.⁹

The presence of his pupils, his father and his wife, with this addition to the household precluded any chance for philosophic calm. On the twenty-ninth of July, Mary gave birth to Milton's first daughter, Anne. It is not surprising that the father found no fit occasion for writing an ode on the infant's nativity. It may be conjectured that the work he had undertaken on a history of England was carried forward very slowly. Milton kept to his house and lived frugally on that part of his revenue which the heavy taxes and tumultuous times permitted him. He could boast, later, that he neither borrowed nor presented himself with a petitioner's face to the authorities.

There was another in the house no happier than he. Early in December of 1646, Richard Powell took the oath to the National Covenant,—a broken Cavalier with a short time to keep his new allegiance. Milton witnessed his will on the thirtieth. Forest Hill, for which he had compounded at Goldsmith's Hall, was

given to young Richard, subject to the payment of the testator's debts and the jointure of his wife. Property at Wheatley, also, was bequeathed to Richard. The rest of the estate was divided so that the daughters received one-third more apiece than did the brothers, and to "daughter Milton" there was to be allotted as much more in addition as the estate would bear. There was no specific reference to the payment of her dowry nor to the debt that had brought Milton to Forest Hill.¹⁰

In January, Richard Powell died. The one member of the household whom Milton really loved, his patient father, lived only two months longer. There were left in the discordant household, Milton, his wife and her mother, brothers and sisters, and the infant Anne, born a "brave girl," but, through ill care or an ill constitution, becoming weak and crippled.

Barbican Street seemed a very long way from Rome and Florence. To Carlo Dati, one of those who had given him friendship and commended his poems, Milton wrote of his loneliness among those who, by accident or tie of law, sat daily in his company,—people who wearied him, even joined to plague him when they were so humored.¹¹ His home was such a replica in little of England's discord that it left him without the will to gird himself for public contest.

It was a distracting time. That Parliament, which Milton had lauded as the instrument of God, now seemed to fail in the great quest for freedom. It was outside its walls that proposals were drafted for the liberation of dissenters from religious persecution: Ireton, Cromwell's son-in-law, pled that none be forced to take the Covenant or use the Prayer Book and that ecclesiastical authority be prohibited from imposing civil penalties. From the Army, came the demand that the right of petition be recognized and that offenses be punishable by law and not at the discretion of the Houses. But were the Independents of the Army any more to be trusted as the guardians of liberty than were the Presbyterians of the Long Parliament, whom they so ardently

opposed? Was either faction any more to be trusted than the baffled King at Hampton Court?

Milton, who had fought the Bishops and the Presbyterians, busied himself now with the writing of his history of England and the formulation of the articles of his belief, a confession of faith on which for some time he had been working, albeit he knew the censorship would not permit its publication. Its doctrines were not for the multitude. But not for them did he employ his time. In the ode which he wrote to John Rous, librarian at Oxford,¹² he expressed delight that his work was to be housed in strict seclusion from the coarse and the unlettered. It was galling that their lusts evolved, at times, such doctrines as, for him, were the issue of pure study and reverend contemplation. With the men of the mob, he recognized no kinship of blood or mind.¹³ It was not for them that he had written his masques and gemmed his poems with classical allusions. It was not for their children that he drew up schemes of education, not for their balladists that he pled for freedom of the press.

In September of 1647, an ordinance of the House of Commons forbade, under severe penalties, the publication of any unlicensed book, pamphlet, treatise or ballad. Pedlars, hawkers and ballad-singers were to have their stock confiscated and to be publicly flogged. The Royalist mercuries, *Pragmaticus*, *Melancholicus*, *Academicus*, *Clericus*, and *Diabolicus*¹⁴ circulated intermittently, even though legislation was further strengthened against them in October. They railed that their new masters could not, in reason, deny that liberty which they professed to establish. But the fact of the ordinances remained. With the playwrights and the balladists, the editors protested that abuse which the author of the mighty *Areopagitica* seemed sullenly to ignore.

He was engaged at the time in changing his residence. It had been determined that the two families should separate,—the Powells seeking out a home for themselves, and Milton, his wife and his little daughter going to a house in High Holborn, that

opened in the rear on the fields and bowling green of Lincoln's Inn. The house was small and, except for the instruction of his nephews, there would be no tutoring.

And here, Milton heard of the event that was to determine his political allegiance and draw him once more into the fray. In November, the King fled Hampton Court for the Isle of Wight. The flight was decisive, in that it showed that he no longer hoped for succor from England and was ready to receive the assistance of her foes.

CHAPTER IX

IN DEFENSE OF REGICIDE

IT seemed in the winter of 1647 that Milton, in his quiet dwelling at High Holborn, intended to observe that same aloofness from the affairs of his time that he had adopted after the publication of the great *Areopagitica*. When he was specifically attacked by the December manifesto of Sion College, he made no answer to the charge that he had been guilty of error "touching marriage and divorce." This self-constituted body of London clergymen was attempting to assist the Westminster Assembly and the London Provincial Synod in exacting from Parliament ecclesiastical control over heresy and an unswerving adherence to the tenets of Presbyterianism. Their manifesto, black-listing heresies, errors and blasphemies, was in the nature of an index, and its condemnation of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* was designed to prevent that pamphlet's circulation among true believers.

Neither this Presbyterian adoption of a Romish index nor Parliament's discarding of Christmas, as being but a Romish festival, aroused protests from the benedict of Holborn Street. In *A Glass for the Times*,¹ the author, "A Friend of Truth," dismissed Milton's doctrine of divorce as one so gross as not to require refutation. He placed it with the heresy of "Little Nonsuch," who claimed biblical justification for incest. So the attacks continued and many, as did Anthony Wood, regarded Milton as a "villainous, leading incendiary," although his life was as quiet as that of any of his neighbors.

On the Isle of Wight, King Charles had entered into an engagement with the Scots, whereby Presbyterianism was to be

established for three years and all other sects suppressed as the price of an armed invasion of England and the restoration of his throne. By his authorization, a treaty, also, was signed with the Irish, which offered most liberal terms in return for the grant to the King of an annual income of £12,000 and taxes for the upkeep of the army. Such agreements made inevitable the outbreak of the Second Civil War. His promises to the Scotch and Irish made the King appear a traitor to distracted England.

In March, that country found herself embroiled again. The struggle which had been one at first of Parliament against the despotism of a King and his lordly Bishops, had, on the defeat of Royalists, become a struggle fought by the Presbyterians of Parliament against the Independents of the Army. In its new phase, the issue, although reluctantly envisaged, was one between republicanism and monarchy. And always, as a constant motif, there was the determination of the middle class to achieve its betterment.

In January of 1648, Cromwell proposed to Parliament that the King be deposed and his powers transferred to the Prince of Wales. The Independents of the Army, led by Lilburne, more consistent than were any of his contemporaries, saw clearly how meaningless such a gesture would be. Charles would not accept deposition. If it were forced upon him, there was no surety his Stuart son would accept the crown, or, accepting it, would govern as a puppet king. These men cried out for a republic and their number grew.

Cromwell, it appeared, had been misguided, perhaps even traitorous, in trafficking with royalty. To continue such a policy would cost his leadership. From Carisbrooke Castle in the Isle of Wight, the King continued to negotiate, not only with English Royalists and Presbyterians, but with the Scots. At Windsor, in May of 1648, Cromwell joined in penitential prayer with army chieftains. He acknowledged that the very present dangers

which they confronted were sent as punishment for the sin of treating with King Charles.

More than ever, it was necessary to suppress those Royalist newsbooks that London read so zealously. Spies were employed and rewards were offered for the arrest of *Melancholicus* and *Elencticus*. A provost marshal was appointed for London and empowered to seize the "Mercuries," who hawked the newsbooks, and to arrest the ballad-singers. Peterhouse in Aldersgate Street was set aside as a Royalist prison and, in spite of escapes and rescues, was always crowded. Playhouses were denuded of their boxes, stages and benches, and persistent actors jailed. They were "proud, parroting players," scoffed *Anti Pragmaticus*, and should be set to work. In his efforts to repress the Royalist ebullience, the provost marshal had the assistance of the commander-in-chief of England's armies, General Fairfax.

By the end of the year, there were no ballads to be bought and rival authors were busy with the obituaries of the Royalist newsbooks. Against the suppression of the plays and the restrictions on the press, Milton offered no successor to his *Areopagitica*. Perhaps he thought that to defend the scurrilities and obscenities that intermixed themselves with what was worthy would be to defend more of license than of liberty. On the part of the Parliament, the wish to hush praise of the King and advocacy of his cause advanced to a wish for positive denunciation of the kingship. The libel that Charles, with the assistance of the Duke of Buckingham, had contrived the poisoning of James I was welcomed and given credence. Henry Walker was authorized to write and publish an argument for the execution of the King. This he did, and published also a translation of the *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* of Junius.

But Milton, at this time, was a regicide only in that he lifted up his hand against King David. The ballad rhymes and meter to which he reduced the pure Hebraic beauty of the psalms are

difficult to pardon. Only to the Puritans have Milton's translations a virtue, in that they are dissimilar to the translations in the Book of Common Prayer.

It was peaceful work, but it could not wholly deaden the clamor of the Civil War or dull completely the sense of his high mission. And though he still worked sedulously upon the history of England's past, thoughts of her present tugged him from his labor. He did not put his trust in the Presbyterian debaters in Parliament, and victories in battle left much to be attained. War would breed only war till truth and right could be freed of their shackles and public faith be cleared of the stain of public fraud. In a sonnet, left unpublished until after his death, Milton appealed to Lord General Fairfax to attend this task. Fairfax was an idealist and a very able general, but it was not Fairfax who was to mould England's destiny.

When military successes, Preston and Colchester, had freed the Army from the Royalist and Scottish menace, the generals undertook again their struggle with the Parliament. They distrusted the dealings of that body with the King. The men of Westminster, unwilling to pay the arrears of the Army, were very willing to barter away the worth of victories. Could the Parliament keep the King and gain their purpose, soldiers, who had risked their lives in the war, would find themselves as heavily oppressed in the exercise of their several religions and as powerless in politics as they had been under Charles and his Bishops. There was drawn up a Great Remonstrance, embodying the demand of the Army that the King be punished by death and that the government be carried on under a democratic constitution.

The King, the army chiefs imprisoned at Hurst Castle, the better to prevent his alliance with their enemies. Parliament not only voted its disapproval, but accepted the conciliatory terms of their defeated foe. On the second of December, 1648, the Army occupied London. Within the week, debates in Parliament were shortened by the very simple, if illegal, expedient of turning

from its doors all members not of the independent faction favored by the Army, Colonel Pride's Purge left sitting only fifty or sixty members, the Rump. Among these, Oliver Cromwell resumed the place he had left when he turned his back upon Parliament to become creator of the Ironsides. Their valor and spirit had so permeated the Army that now the soldiers thought they had the power to create for themselves such a Parliament as they might wish. The House of Commons, the only political institution the Army now could trust, assumed by resolution supreme power in the state.

There was grave work ahead and no shadow that might contribute to the illusion of authority should be neglected. It was a work which could not be popular. It must be made to seem authoritative. The Royalist press railed at "King Cromwell." It assured Charles that he still held the loyalty of a vast number of his subjects.² There appeared at this time some psalms, daintily set to music by Henry Lawes and his brother, William, "servants to his Majesty." The work was prefixed by a very complimentary sonnet addressed by Milton to the composer, in 1646. For further embellishment, there was a copper plate portrait of King Charles, the last to be published in his lifetime. This assured for the volume a sale, even with those who could not read the music.

The notes were easier to scan for the unlearned than was the Rump's resolution easy to comprehend by the learned. This proclaimed, in January of 1649, that the people of England were, under God, the original of all first power in the state, that the Commons in Parliament assembled were the chosen representatives of the people and possessed supreme power in their name, and that whatever they might enact should have the force of law, without the consent of King or House of Lords. One cannot believe that such statements even deceived the Commons. They knew well that, acting at the dictates of the Army, and minus two thirds of their number, who had long ago withdrawn to suc-

cor the King, and minus, also, the ninety-six Presbyterians, whom Pride had ejected, they represented the people of England less than any fifty men met together at random in any part of the kingdom. To try the King, they appointed a High Court of Justice,—not of judges, for of these none would serve, but of men known to be the King's enemies.

Secretly he was brought before them so that there could be no demonstration in his favor. But the people admitted to the rear of Westminster Hall cried out "God save the King!" And those who hated Charles Stuart as a shifty knave, constant only in the defense of his prerogative, yet felt that the Court that condemned him was a criminal mockery of justice. The government of Switzerland, reluctant to welcome to the sisterhood of republics a nation that would attain its ends by means so unquestionably base, protested the legality of such a court.

Charles did not appeal to his brother monarchs on the score that his trial was their concern in that it contradicted the theory of monarchy by right divine. He made his protest to the nation as an English sovereign. There was no English statute nor precedent to warrant the trial of a king by Parliament.

They could not say that, through the evil acts of his reign, he had deprived himself of his high dignity, for they had condoned these by treating with him to the very end. The members of the Court, although they were assured they were the representatives of the sovereign English people, were ill at ease. Many remained absent from its sessions. It was Cromwell who held the others to their labors. "Ironsides," Prince Rupert had called him, and Ironsides he proved in this. While the Presbyterian ministers prayed and preached for the King, and the Royalist Mercuries, in their impotence, derided the "Saints" with all the obscenities of which they were capable, the trial went on. To one who had refused to serve as judge, Cromwell had boasted: "I tell you, we will cut off his head with the crown upon it."

On the thirtieth of January, 1649, the verdict, adjudged before the trial, was executed. For a last time, the King stood in the Banqueting House of Whitehall, where gods and goddesses from Rubens' painted ceiling had watched his feasts and ceremonies. Then he stepped through a great window to the high, black-draped scaffolding and the headsman's ax that there awaited him.

Below he gazed upon the dour, uneasy faces of the soldiers of his enemies. Beyond the ranks that made their cordon, pressed the crowd,—men who believed themselves his subjects. Charles would have spoken to these people. He would have left them, as a solemn legacy, his ultimate conception of their liberties, but there was noise of the soldiery. And the distance was too great for his voice to carry. And so at death, as he had been in life, he remained aloof. He could but speak to those around him. His sentence, he declared to be unjust, and yet for him to be the victim of injustice would be but retribution for an unjust sentence that he had permitted to be executed upon another. It was of Strafford that the King was thinking. He would have had forgiveness from the great minister who had learned how perilous it was to put one's trust in princes. Lacking the grace of such a pardon, Charles pardoned now the causers of his own misfortunes. But for their conduct toward the nation, he had only condemnation:

It is not my case alone, it is the freedom and liberty of the people of England, for if power without laws make laws, may alter the fundamental laws of the kingdom, I do not know what subject he is in England can be sure of his life or anything that he calls his own.

That they might not impede the headsman, he looped his curls beneath his cap. He spoke a minute privately to Bishop Juxon, entrusted to him his pendant of St. George, and then doffed cloak and doublet. Above the black-hung railing of the scaffolding, the people saw the King raise arms and head as though he

prayed. When his figure disappeared, they knew that he had knelt to lay his head upon the scaffold.

Briefly and with what dignity the circumstances would permit, he became a royal martyr. Or so the Cavaliers and populace acclaimed him, and the shouts of the soldiery could not over-top their sobs and prayers.

The King was dead, but in the capital no man might cry, "God save the King!" What pledges of loyalty were made the second Charles, what wishes for his safety, were made in silence. His father was not the first of England's monarchs to have died a violent death and might not be the last. The history of the country held precedents for deposition,—even termination of a reign by regicide. For all that, the scene outside the Banqueting House of Whitehall was astoundingly unique. Cromwell had had his will: the King had been killed "with his crown on." It had been proven that the royal bauble added nothing of height or potency to the man who wore it. Trial and execution had been public. Publicly, the law of the land had been flouted. Publicly, the will of the majority of the English people had been challenged. For this, there had been no palliation of excuse made to the nation, no oratory to plead legality of dire necessity.

The King was dead. For those who held with Cromwell, hypocrisy was dead and double dealing. What had been revered as sacrosanct was proven merely earthly. The people groaned at a severed head, but this would soon be putrid. Many thought a stench already rose from foul deeds of the dead King. England, they felt, would never more be ruled by illusion, never more by foreign favorites or a foreign queen. The conquest of the Normans was now avenged by godly English squires and English armies. What form the Government might take, or how its form might shift, were matters minor in consideration. Events would determine what was expedient; and in expediency, there would be logic higher than that discoverable through the pallid reasoning of man.

Miters and lawn sleeves, croziers and popish ceremony, a church tinctured by Roman ritual, upheld by monarchy,—upholding monarchy, must yield to such beliefs and practices as Englishmen might weld into a mighty bulwark for the strengthening of the English nation. England should be forever England. That a purpose so patriotic should have been accomplished by force of armed minority,—the faction of a faction, dimmed nothing of its glory. Rather, the few deserved the better of their country. They would reward themselves with honors and heightened power against that day when England,—all England, would arise and call them blessed.

To the King's men, it seemed far otherwise. It seemed there died with Charles an institution of such weight and dignity as had brought to an end all feudal strife and synchronized a nation out of tumult. The King was to them the human embodiment of the state. A parliament,—two chambered and elected by the nation's will, was surety against oppression. The laws of the land had developed under rule of monarchy and under such a rule might men most wisely hope for their observance. There had been instances of oppression, there had been intervals of misgovernment. These, there might be in the future, but the principles of monarchy, parliament and the common law were fundamental to the English nation. The religious settlement effected by Elizabeth had produced a church that was Anglican, not only in denomination, but in spirit and in truth. For these institutions, the King's men still would struggle. The Church was rent by heresy, deprived of state support and superseded by sects that followed Jack and Jill as their new prophets. The matter would be righted. The King was dead, but Royalists would show that monarchy was everlasting, that the institution of parliament would yet function to avenge the death of Charles I, that the law would yet bring confusion to his enemies. Till such a time, his blood would cry to heaven for its just revenge.

Other than the execution of the King, no event could so dra-

matically have focused the attention of England and the world upon the ethics of the struggle. To prove that the two masked headsmen and those who paid them were right or to prove that they were wrong, would be to decide the issue of the Civil Wars for or against rebellion.

On February 6, it was voted by the handful of men left sitting in the House of Lords that sovereign power inhered in the remnant of the Long Parliament,—that the House of Lords was “useless and dangerous, and ought to be abolished.” Writs for an election were issued in the name of the “Keepers of the Liberty of England.” Under surveillance of the Army, it was hoped the votes would be cast for the support of a republic.

Three days after these parliamentary proceedings, the blood of the King manifested a potency that in life Charles had tragically lacked. That he was sovereign still within his kingdom was shown by the tremendous sale of a small volume, published secretly in London on the day of the King's funeral. No book of the seventeenth century was destined to so great a sale as the *Eikōn Basilikē*.³ It purported to be a compendium of those last prayers and meditations which had enabled the King to end so nobly his misguided life. Published in quarto and in pocket size, cheaply, or in rich mourning, the book delivered rapidly its message: the King had been as devout as Oliver. He had striven to uphold the Church, not because the Bishops supported his prerogative, but because he believed the Church was necessary to England's spiritual salvation. He had been humble before his God and he had loved his people as tenderly as he had loved his children. Legends grew, and to the martyred Defender of the Faith, there was ascribed the power of working miracles. Those who had touched a part of his clothing claimed a cure for all their ills, and shreds of handkerchiefs, said to have been dipped in the royal blood, were sold as sacred relics.

Ireland was in rebellion. The army that must subdue it was tainted with a dangerous discontent. There had not followed on

the execution of the King that era of equality for which John Lilburne and the Levelers had agitated. How could the phantom of dead Charles be laid so that the living could go about their business?

In John Milton's note-books there were many references to regicide. Under the title *Tyrannus*, he had considered whether it were lawful to rise against a tyrant. He had noted that Seneca adjudged no sacrifice more acceptable to God than that of an unjust and wicked king. The execution of such a one, he further noted, was judged by the common people in accordance with the degree of its success and by their betters in accordance with the purpose of the executioners. From Holinshed, he learned that Richard II had been deposed by Parliament and had had judgment decreed against him by the Commons to the end that he "avoid further mischief in the realm."

Milton was no democrat. His note-book held that worthy princes or leaders should be implicitly obeyed by the less gifted. Only by such submission could appetites and passions be kept under control. His doctrines gave no aid nor comfort to the proud Levelers. The section headed *Leges* was filled with references to prove that laws had been devised to bind and limit the power of governors, "that they might not make lust their judge and minister." Here, then, was a doctrine that reconciled liberty with authority and preached allegiance only to that authority which, itself, obeyed the law. This was the very doctrine that Cromwell laid down in angry, terse rebukes to Levelers. He feared the anarchy their doctrines might engender as much as he feared the rigors of Presbyterians,—those last-won, ardent friends of the late King. But Cromwell was no orator nor pamphleteer.

His followers, then, welcomed all the more *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, which appeared, unlicensed, over the initials, J. M., a scant four days after the publication of the King's Book. It afforded the first support Parliament had received out-

side its walls and argued the cause in no uncertain manner. The lengthy title which the pamphlet carried, in accordance with the custom of the time, proclaimed that it was lawful, and had been held so through the ages, for any, who had the power, to call to account a tyrant,—if the courts would not do so, and, after due conviction, to depose and bring him to the block.

And that Milton considered this first of his pamphlets in defense of civil liberty to be not unconnected with the struggle he had waged with the Presbyterians, the title further shows. For it states that those Presbyterians, who had recently inveighed so hotly against deposition, were, themselves, most responsible for having occasioned deposition. During the King's trial, they had wearied Milton with their iteration and reiteration that it was not in the tenets of the Reformation for a Protestant country to bring its sovereign to judgment. That the king of a reformed nation had not before been punished, Milton told the Presbyterians, was because the Protestant kings had not abused their power. Protestants had risen against many Catholic princes and might rise against Protestant oppressors also. He quoted the Scriptures and the words of many great Reformers to prove that submission to tyranny was not obligatory. This, Knox and John Craig and the Scottish Presbyterians had practiced and proclaimed in the reign of Queen Mary.

And, as for those Presbyterians of England, who wished to compass the impossible and be at the same time the subjects and the active enemies of their sovereign, they had effected his deposition long ago. By the "Agreement" to which they had bound him, they had brought about "the very death and burial of all that in him was regal." Who kills a king must kill while the assailed is yet a king. Those who had long denied the office and dignity of the King were the true regicides. To preserve the mere bulk of his person, bereft of even the shadow of power, would not free them from the odium of rebellion.

Milton's reasoning here is hard to follow. To fasten the term,

regicide, upon the Presbyterian faction, he seems to summon back his Cambridge metaphysics. For if Charles had been unkinged by the rebellion of his subjects, what need was there to bring his body to Westminster for trial and to the scaffold for execution? Cromwell's blunt wish to kill him with his crown on seems the more logical.

When Milton is not dealing with the Presbyterians, he can treat of the matter abstractly and so, more forcibly. The pamphlet shows him to have believed in a state of nature,—not resting his belief on an innate consciousness of the laws of that primitive state, but on the evidence of the Book of Genesis. Through the first sin, man, who had been free, abused his liberty and became corrupt. The wish for mutual safety impelled his descendants to take a common oath. This not sufficing, they delegated some part of their power to commissioners, that these might secure for them protection and a proper administration of their affairs. When the sin of Adam prevailed against the virtue of the commissioners, the people made laws to bind them from the abuse of the power with which they had been entrusted. And the better to restrain them, their sovereign subjects imposed upon them covenants and oaths, such as kings still pledged at coronation. So towns, cities and commonwealths developed.

Titles, Milton found in studying history, had been first used to designate those to whom had been assigned especial trusts or duties. They had not been hereditary. He thought that every worthy man in Parliament might be considered, for the public good, a fit peer and judge of the King. When the Monarch misruled and broke the law, he degenerated into a tyrant, and just as surely as nature gave the individual the right of self-defense against the violence of the King, so had men, bound together in a Commonwealth, the collective right to protect themselves from tyranny. Were this not so, the liberty of England would be no more than a "ridiculous and painted freedom to cozen babies."

Kings should be held accountable to men as well as God, for many kings were without the fear of God. Just opposition to tyranny was not rebellion, but the fulfillment of a duty to one's fellow subjects,—renunciation of an allegiance that had been freely given and so could be freely withheld. To determine when to resume their delegated authority, men must keep their minds free from superstition and their bodies from the genuflections of a blind obedience.

Those English subjects and magistrates, who, unpunished by the courts, ignored their country's laws were but as Turks and Saracens and should be opposed by single defense and civil war. The law of civil defense was identical with that of foreign hostility. It was not distance of place that made enmity but enmity that made distance of place. If a brother Englishman could transform himself into a heathen, it was true, conversely, that a mutual bond of amity and brotherhood existed between man and man over all the world. The seas, themselves, could not sever England from that duty and relation. Milton, with a wholly English afflatus, was willing to acknowledge that whosoever kept peace with him in a nation however remote, was for him a neighbor and an Englishman!

This very national form of internationalism went unremarked, but the arguments defending rebellion were joyfully received. They were remembered, not only in England, but borne away by men who sought for peace abroad and labored, with their aid, to obtain justice in government.⁴ Milton's aim was less ambitious than to inspire a future Declaration of Independence. His present need was to bring scorn upon his enemies, the Presbyterians, and to vindicate, in the eyes of the people, the execution of the King.⁵

The pamphlet commended him to the authorities. A national approval of the deed, even though *ex post facto*, would prove valuable. It was remembered that Milton had written against the Bishops and Presbyterians with that ferocity and coarseness

which the age accounted of high service in dispute. He had pled once for freedom of the press, but had made no outcry against Parliament's subsequent repressions. He had argued for divorce, and that occasioned pause, but it was observed that Mr. Milton now was living with his wife in apparent peace,—that he had had two daughters by her. Mr. Milton had audacity. That was needed. He was learned and could quote Scripture and the classics to good purpose. He was a Latin scholar and was esteemed abroad, as the *Eulogia* of his poems well showed.

The Council of State was in need of such a secretary for the translation of those dispatches in French and Latin that it received from foreign governments and for the inditing of its own proposals and replies. The young republic had not been the recipient of over many communications. The secretary would have time to spare, which might be used for the defending of the policy of his employers. It was decided that the Council's committee for the consideration of questions regarding foreign policy should speak with Mr. Milton to know whether he would be employed as Secretary for the Foreign Tongues. Composing the committee were Mr. Whitelocke, Sir Henry Vane, Lord Lisle, the Earl of Denbigh, Mr. Marten and Mr. Lile. Of these, two members sought out the scholar in High Holborn and set before him their proposal.

He could approve the Council. Its forty-one members had been chosen for one year, according to a plan devised by the army leaders, and had made themselves the focal point in the new government. The Council met at Derby House, but would soon move to Whitehall. Milton's attendance at its sittings would not have to be constant. Much of the work he could transact in private. An apartment close at hand would be provided in a reasonable period. The yearly salary would be about £288, worth then five times as much as now,—an adequate wage and the same that had been paid his predecessor, Mr. Weikherlyn.⁶ These things Milton considered and much besides. The offer was unsolicited

and unexpected. He had received from his writings nothing more remunerative than "peace of conscience and the approbation of the good." Civil commotions and oppressive contributions had so diminished his revenue that it afforded him a scant subsistence.

In *The Judgment of Martin Bucer*, he had written, "My mother bore me a speaker of what God made mine own and not a translator." Should he curb his native humor for creation,—for bodying forth the message he was divinely chosen to deliver; should he bind himself to mere transcribing, so that dispatches might be rendered into creditable Latin and the men of the Council be furnished with translations of what they were too ignorant to read? The proffered office would give him access to those who shaped the policy of England. He could, through the dignity and purity of his Latin,—for French he would not write, gain for this fledgling, blood-bedabbled state a measure of prestige. When the Great Council better knew his worth, they would accord him occupation more suitable than the translation of dispatches.⁷

The decision was not delayed. The Order Book of the Council provides on March 15, 1649, that Mr. Milton shall become the Secretary of Foreign Tongues. On the same day, Cromwell was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and given command of an army to secure him in his post. Within the week, Milton took his oath of office at Derby House. It involved a declaration of approval of the trial and execution of the King and of the abolition of the monarchy and House of Lords.

Until such time as an apartment in Whitehall could be given him, he took up his residence with his wife and daughters in a house next door to the Bull Head Tavern and opening on Spring Garden. Charing Cross, which gave the neighborhood its name, had been removed two years before, in deference to the ultra Protestants.

The new Secretary was forty-one years old, of sober dress and dignified demeanor. His eyes were large and clear, but one, the

right, he could use only sparingly. He was somewhat envious that others, without labor or desert, had possessed themselves of honors and emoluments, but he was as confident as he had been in his youth at Horton, that the destiny he would fulfill, was high.

CHAPTER X

SECRETARY OF FOREIGN TONGUES

March 22, 1649,

Letters to be sent to Hamburg in behalf of the Merchant Adventurers approved and to be translated into Latin by Mr. Milton.

March 26,

Mr. Milton appointed to make some observations on a paper lately printed called *Old and New Chains*.

ORDER BOOK OF THE COUNCIL.¹

MILTON'S first commission as Secretary of Foreign Tongues, a letter for the agent of the Merchant Adventurers' Company to present to the Senate of Hamburg, was executed, not speedily, but with that excellence which the Council had expected. It was bootless labor. The agent returned with his mission unaccomplished and the seal of Milton's letter unbroken. He had found the Senate of the City of Hamburg unwilling to receive him.²

One notes with satisfaction that the second commission remained unexecuted. *Old and New Chains* was the work of Lieutenant Colonel John Lilburne, the Leveler, whose nine years of imprisonment had heightened alarmingly his love of freedom. The chains of the new government seemed more galling than the fetters of his prison. The Commonwealth's insistence on a licensed press, the heavy fines imposed on those who spread abroad or purchased "scandalous or libelous books," the flogging of their hawkers at the House of Correction, aroused his protests, as well as did the autocratic methods by which the government had established and still maintained itself. Nor could his voice be silenced by the Treason Act, although it provided that those

who declared the Commonwealth tyrannical or of illegal creation and those who questioned the sovereign power of Parliament should be hanged, drawn and quartered.

Lilburne was amazed that after the fair blossoms of hopeful liberty, there had broken forth "the bitter fruit of vilest and hatest bondage." Liberty and freedom had been the just end of the late wars,—the true distinction of men from beasts, so dear and precious that he wished no further life after their extinction. Almost he dared the vengeance of the Council: "Give me leave resolutely to tell you," he challenged, "I am sorry I have but one life to lose, in maintaining the truth, justice and righteousness of so gallant a peace." The one hundred pamphlets which remain as evidence of his struggle show him to have had no need of the impetus of answer by an official champion. It has been said that had John Lilburne been sole inhabitant of the terrestrial globe, John would have quarreled with Lilburne, and Lilburne with John.

In what the new seal of the Commonwealth declared to be "the first year of freedom by God's blessing restored," Lilburne was in the heyday of his popularity and his conflict. With many of the expedients he advocated for the securing of liberty, Milton had shown himself in sympathy: separation of State and Church, the rule of reason as the only valid law, freedom of press and pulpit. Lilburne's patriotism and fortitude, the simplicity and rugged vigor of his style, may have won Milton's liking. Certainly, in the twenty-two thousand pamphlets which Thomason collected in this period there is no evidence of a tilt between John Lilburne and John Milton. One wishes that they might have been friends. Each could have learned much from the other.

Two days after Milton had received the commission which he failed to execute, he was assigned another more agreeable. The House had ordered publication of the papers regarding Ireland and it was felt desirable that these should be accompanied with a strongly worded statement of England's difficulties. The fram-

ing of such a statement was assigned to the new Secretary. As a result, there appeared in May *The Articles of Peace, Made and Concluded with the Irish Rebels*, together with Milton's *Observations* on the documents. The book was published by authority and Milton's twenty pages of commentaries are not signed, since now he was a cog in the government he defended. The publication of this treaty, which had been contracted with the Irish by the Earl of Ormonde on behalf of King Charles, was probably at the instance of Cromwell, who at this time regularly attended the Council. The Lord Lieutenant, Elect, of Ireland wished to prepare the minds of the public before his departure for those cruelties which he believed would be necessary. The English were to remember the King's effort to bring upon them a barbarous invasion of the Irish. This would increase their hatred of the Irish and diminish that affection for the King, which the *Eikōn Basilikē* was fanning to unreasonable proportions. The fact that the publication did not take place for several weeks after the Order in Council, was due, probably, not to delay on Milton's part, but to Cromwell's wish that the pamphlet should appear at a date approximating that of the departure of his expedition.

Meantime, Milton examined letters and papers at the Council's request. He translated despatches from the Dutch concerning the affair of Dr. Dorislaus, the Commonwealth's agent, who had been murdered at the Hague early in May. The presence there of the son of Charles I and his followers had occasioned an uneasiness which the murder gravely intensified. Any indignity or violence suffered abroad by the new government was quickly blazoned in England by the enemy-newsbooks and afforded satisfaction to the Royalists.

In the middle of May, the Council employed John Hall at a much smaller salary than Milton's to answer "such pamphlets as should come out to the prejudice of the Commonwealth."

Hall was a Cambridge man, a wistful poet and brilliant pamphleteer. He was far gone on the way to becoming the sot that two years later was described as "a strange rhinoceros," whose trap stick legs bore up miraculously the unwieldy burden of his girth.³ He was in debt and the government advanced him £30 on his taking the oath,—a hack writer who would do as he was bid.

For Milton's fame, it might be wished that poor Hall had been employed earlier and entrusted with the writing of the *Observations* that accompanied the documents concerning Ireland. In them, the political philosopher seems to have dwindled meagerly so that he could be fitted out with the pantaloons of a partisan defender. The *Observations* embody a splenetic attack upon the Manifesto issued by the Presbytery of Belfast against the execution of Charles and the transformation wrought upon the government. Milton answered point by point this "word-valorous" document, dignifying his task by attributing to the Manifesto the hostilities then current in Ulster. It had called the members of the Parliament "servants." Milton marvels that the earth can bear this "insufferable insolency of upstarts." The epithets he chooses for the Council's enemies are "highland thieves and redshanks," "Balaams," "deceivers" and "incendiaries." But he adduces nothing new by way of argument and his wholesale condemnation of the concessions which Charles had wished to grant to Ireland aligns Milton with the thousands of other English whose misreading of the Irish problem has been only equaled by the strength of their convictions. The Catholic massacre of Protestants in 1641 was very present in his memory. The Irish were inhuman rebels and Papists, and what woes they suffered were justly due them through their demerits and provocations.

The *Observations* are notable in regard to their passages on religion. Milton is consistent in his condemnation of Catholicism, Anglicanism and Presbyterianism but seems to retrogress in the

matter of freedom of speech. Church censures, he claimed, should be limited to Church matters. Affairs of state are not for the meddling of ministers. General exhortations to justice and obedience should be permissible, but not a busy-body participation in political disputes. There is retrogression, also, in the matter of religious toleration. Speaking as an official of the government, Milton stated that there should be no toleration for the free exercise of any religion which might be contrary to sound doctrine or the power of godliness. Presumably, it was the office of the state to determine in such a matter.

However disappointing the *Observations* may be in regard to political theory, the pamphlet served to keep well polished those weapons which the Commonwealth had need to use against the Royalists. The popularity of the King's Book was unparalleled. Not only was it published surreptitiously in London, but copies were smuggled from the Hague, the Continental capital of Royalists. On March 16, 1649, the Sergeant at Arms had been empowered "to make stay of and seize at the press all those books now printing or printed under the name of the Book of the late King." Next day, as a rejoinder to "the pious prayers and meditations," there appeared an official defense of Parliament. It had been ordered by the Commons, in Parliament assembled, that a declaration be made, expressing the grounds of their late proceedings and of settling the government in the way of a free state. This *Declaration of the Parliament of England*⁴ reviewed the iniquities of King Charles,—the levying of ship money, tonnage and poundage, the intimidation of the judges, dissolution of parliaments, the abuses of purveyance and afforestation and the treasonable dealings with Scotland and Ireland. In view of the people's deliverance, it expressed a hope for "cheerful concurrence for the establishment of the great work" then in hand.

Two months later John Goodwin, in his *Obstructors of Justice*,⁵ defended the sentence against the King, buttressing his arguments with quotations from Milton to prove how continuous had been

Protestant rebellion against tyranny, and how classic Rome had set the example for tyrannicide.

The strict enforcement of the ordinances had stilled the ballad-singers, but there were still two persistent newsbooks to aid and abet the posthumous plea of the King. The more popular of these was *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, written by the scurrilous and witty Marchmont Needham,⁶ once a defender of the policy of Parliament. In June, he was arrested and had his papers seized. Shortly after, Milton was given the task of examining them and reporting to the Council. His report we do not have, but *Pragmaticus* was suppressed and Needham sent to Newgate.

In July, 1649, appeared *An Inquisition After Blood*, addressed to the Parliament and the "Army Regnant." It was headed by a threat:

Blood is a crying sin, but that of Kings
Cries louder for revenge, and ruin brings.

The object of the pamphlet was to denounce the rumor that coupled Charles I and Buckingham as murderers of King James,—"as base a lie as ever the devil belch'd out." The game of smut, —of obscuring real issues by blackening one's neighbor, was played with unremitting gusto on both sides. It was a dangerous game for the Royalists, since Parliament held the keys to the prisons. The publication of *Anarchia Anglicana*, a second part of Clement Walker's *History of Independency*, sent its author, in September of 1649, to take up his residence in the Tower. His books and papers had been examined by Milton and had been judged treasonable by the Council of State. Trial by jury for political offenses had been suspended. In two years, Walker's death freed the State from the cost of his further imprisonment. Any recording of unorthodox beliefs or of the vagaries of the "tub thumpers" and the prophesying sisters was most unpopular with the new government. Even Dr. Hakluyt's *Metropolitan Nuncio*, although its reference to Milton's *Doctrine and Discipline of*

Divorce was eminently laudatory, was accounted an ill servant of the Commonwealth and permitted to survive for only two issues.

The Royalists strove to better their cause by printing those papers in which, at Newcastle, Charles had agreed to make liberal concessions to his Presbyterian subjects. The Cavaliers were building up a legend of martyrdom, which, if it held, would give the phantom King a power greater than Cromwell's armies. At the Hague, they had employed Claude de Saumaise, esteemed one of the greatest Continental scholars, to write a Latin defense of the King that would resound through all the courts of Europe. In Thomason's collection, dated May 11, 1649, there appears the book of de Saumaise, *Defensio Regia pro Carolo I contra Populum Anglicanum*. Milton, perhaps, thus early read the Defense to which he was to make his famous reply.

In England, pamphlets for the Royalists were printed secretly and "By authority." Parliament found it could not put its trust in licensers. In May, it was found necessary to discharge Mabbott for the lax discharge of his office. He had no regret for his offense and wished more tracts of Levelers and Monarchists had found the light of day. Licensing, he said, had come to be as great a monopoly as there had ever been in the nation. It was remembered that something of this kind had been said before by one who now acted as interpreter to ambassadors and translated into ornate Latin the dispatches sent abroad by England's Council.

Lest a wave of reaction should sweep away the newly erected structure of the state, there was enacted on September 20, 1649, a press act so drastic in its restrictions and penalties that, by June of 1650, all Royalist newsbooks were dead. The system of many licensers was abolished. In the case of political pamphlets and newsbooks, supervision was entrusted to the Clerk of Parliament, the Army Secretary and an additional nominee of the Council of State. Books in England could be printed only in London, York and the Universities. The Master and Wardens of the Stationers'

Company were to pass on books brought from abroad, and these could be imported only into London. Fines and imprisonment were provided for the writing, publishing and sale of scandalous or seditious libels. For non-political literature, the Bradshaw Press Act offered greater leniency than had been enjoyed hitherto, but against the political free-thinker the press was securely barricaded.

No one was more keenly intolerant of the tendency against which this statute was enacted than was John Milton. For Englishmen, each with a birthright to reason and liberty, to be cozened by the picture of a king at prayer was disillusioning. He heartily welcomed the commission to take his pen in hand and recall the people to their senses. If he could not shake them from king worship, how, longer, could he take pride in being their champion and monitor? He bethought himself of those Greek emperors, who, after a long tradition of idolatry, had smashed the superstitious images and restored their people to a truer worship. To the King's *Eikōn Basilikē*, he opposed *Eikōnoklastes*,⁷ preferring Queen Truth, as he claimed, to King Charles.

But to the reader, Queen Truth seems many times very far from Milton's pages. He constrained his book to walk side by side with that of the King, attempting, in the fashion of the day, a chapter by chapter refutation. Yet the two books do not keep step. Milton found the style of the King's Book commendable, "the fiction smooth and cleanly." Whatever may have been the manner of the King in life, his book walked humbly. Milton's soared sometimes, but many times, it stumbled. Its author, after his first stooping to pick up the gauntlet of the King, held his head very high.

Supposedly, he was writing for the people of England, but for the mass of his audience he showed a contempt that knits him in blood-brotherhood with Coriolanus. The *Eikōn Basilikē*, Milton said, had caught the worthless approbation of an inconstant, irrational and image-doting rabble, that, like a credulous and hap-

less herd, begotten to servility and enchanted with tyranny, had, through the simple device of a picture of the King at prayers, held out both their ears with delight and ravishment to be stigmatized and bored through in witness of their own voluntary and beloved baseness. Scorn so labored and so conscious was a poor substitute for the meek portrait of the King. It can well be imagined that the people did not flock to lend their ears to the tribune of the Commonwealth, even though he boasted that he wrote in behalf of liberty.

Published officially and assisted in its distribution by the government, three editions of Milton's work were all that were required in three years as against forty-seven in one year of the *Eikon Basiliké*. Some of the latter, published secretly, especially the tenth to the fourteenth editions, show such haste to set the King's prayers before the multitude that the type is turned topsy turvy, leaping over and tumbling beneath the lines and these all crooked and broken in themselves. The pagination letters and figures are often missing and the pages indifferently leaded and spaced,—the whole, a presentation most unroyal in appearance.

Milton and others suspected that neither was the book royal in authorship. Many years after, Charles II and the Duke of York admitted that it was the work of Dr. John Gauden, who after the Restoration was awarded a bishopric for his labors. The agreement of the King had been won to the project of its publication by the plea of the great good that it would do his desperate cause. He had made additions and corrections, but his greatest contribution had been the dignity and courage of his latest days. Prayers engendering such fortitude were worthy of perusal. Hawkers had ever found the populace eager for the "last words" and ballads of gallows-birds. The King's prayers dignified a vulgar curiosity in death throes into pity for the righteous petitions of one who was esteemed a martyred sovereign.

Milton protected himself against future disclosures by addressing his answer either to the King or to his "household rhetori-

cian," exercising the privilege, whenever it availed his arguments, of ascribing the whole matter to Charles.

It was reason, the law of law, that he claimed as guide in the writing of *Eikonoklastes*, but it was the reason of a man convinced of the authority of his own judgment, the reason of one trained in Cambridge metaphysics, of one possessed of, as often as possessing, those strong emotions which must inhere in a great poet,—the reason, it must be added, of one in the employment of the government. Such reason does not make for the most convincing of arguments. Careless of his former praise of monarchy as beneficent under a just king, he denounced, in *Eikonoklastes*, all monarchy, claiming that history had proven that kings, in general, were tyrannical.

Not only in regard to Charles, did Milton adopt for his motto *De mortuis nil nisi malum*. In reading his hot pages all kings appear to have been Tarquins. The enormities of Charles are stretched to include his literary companionship with Shakespeare and his innocent dalliance with such romancers as Sir Philip Sidney. Strange, that the young poet of Horton could have fathered a pamphleteer who could deride as "polluted trash" the *Arcadia* and even the dramas of that sovereign playwright whom he had acclaimed in his first published sonnet! One of the prayers ascribed to the king in some of the editions of *Eikon Basiliké* was an adaptation of Pamela's prayer in *Arcadia*.⁸ This plagiarism called forth more vituperation than any of the late King's breaches of the constitution and this, although Milton, himself, was by no means certain that the King's Book was the work only of the King. The bitterness with which the Council's Secretary condemned the deluding of the English by theft of a heathen petition to a "buzzard idol" has resulted in several efforts to fasten upon Milton, himself, the guilt of the insertion. The argument for this is not convincing, resting, as it does, largely upon the testimony of a renegade printer, reported long after the Restoration. Editions published at the Hague under the protec-

tion of Charles II also contain the prayer. Another of the included prayers was not original. If one such prayer were supplied the King by his own faction, why, then, not two?

However, though it is most improbable that Milton interpolated the prayer, it is unfortunately true that he repeated the unjustifiable rumor of the dead King's complicity with Buckingham in the death of James. Milton, at this time, had been entrusted with the supervision of the Keeper of the State Paper Office and had access to any of the documents. Surely, with research, he could have preferred a charge more novel and more tenable.

Very rightly, he called the King to judgment for the many sins that were of royal origin. Very rightly, he did not attempt to offer as a counterpoise consideration of the magnificent advance of England under her new government. Such advance had not been made. The noble image of England, which Milton formerly envisaged, had not been realized by the destruction of a king and the exaltation of a faction. In so far as the dream outshone reality, Milton was forced to bank the fires of his emotion. Had his ardent love and praise for the England of his vision blazed out again, how dark the England of the Commonwealth must have appeared in contrast! It was the part of discretion to expend his efforts on a justification of what had been done. And yet had he acknowledged that some evil had been done, he would have been impelled to a nobler effort than was the *Eikonoklastes*, and one executed for the achievement of a higher aim. That good may come from evil may be a fallacy. But the justification of evil by the inspiring of consequent great deeds is more ennobling than the justification of evil through the instilling of retrogressive hatred for former obstructers of advance, and it is more worthy than persuasion to an uncritical acceptance of their destroyers. Had Milton dared to keep clear his vision of that noble and puissant nation of which he aspired to be the prophet; had he disclosed that vision in luminous majesty to his

perplexed countrymen; had he been wise enough to see that the mob, which he despised, was a multitude of men who could be made sentient of citizenship and worthy of high endeavor, England might have gained a great leader and the Commonwealth have lost a Latin Secretary.

For the benefit of a faction, whose government rested upon the forcible suppression of the majority, that its supreme power over the rabble might seem justifiable, Milton further developed his contract theory. It may be remembered that in his earlier statement of this theory, he had claimed the coronation oath to be a survival of the first pledge exacted of a sovereign by a people entrusting him with power. In the case of Charles, this oath had been varied in its form from the accustomed oath of England's monarchs. Milton claimed the King had omitted certain restricting words, so that he might with freer conscience tyrannize over his people. True, these words had been omitted, but, they had been omitted, also, by King James and this, at the instance of Parliament itself.⁹ Even the mutilated oath, Milton claimed, Charles had disregarded, holding it as a mere blind and brutish formality. His subjects, then, had been relieved from the allegiance that was their part of the contract.

In the earlier statement of his theory, Milton had argued that law was established in order to restrict the powers of the kings or commissioners after it had been found that, through the sin of Adam, this was necessary. In *Eikonoklastes*, he restates the theory in such a way as to give Parliament a parity of antiquity with the King and to proclaim its supremacy:

Neither king, law, civil oaths, nor religion was ever established without the parliament. And their power is the same to abrogate as to establish; neither is anything to be thought established, but that which that house declares to be established. Where the parliament sits, there inseparably sits the king, there the laws, there our oaths and whatsoever can be civil in religion.

It followed that the King's prerogative was negligible. One syllable of his breath put into the scales against the joint voice and efficacy of a whole parliament could not be ponderous. The King, unsupported by his Parliament, had been a wraith while he yet lived. Milton berated Charles for having, on occasion, excluded twelve bishops from the sovereign parliament and for having attempted to overawe it by force when he wished to arrest the Five Members. Naturally, he made no criticism of the legality of the Commonwealth's Parliament, nor of the "purge" effected by Colonel Pride. He was attempting only to refute the claims to piety and justice of the royal *Eikon Basiliké*.

It is not surprising that, with the dominant party, this ascription to them of high power was popular. They pronounced the *Eikonoklastes* an excellent piece. So sturdy a champion, with a prose at once so scholarly and vigorous, had the strength of twenty such bishops as had striven to uphold the King. The religious ecstasy for that which Milton held noble, as well as the irreligious spleen with which he denounced what to him seemed hateful, alike commended him. For what was hateful to Milton was conveniently, also, hateful to his superiors in office. Even surpassing his hatred of the King, appeared his hatred of the Bishops and their successors, the Presbyters. The capes and surplices, trinkets of the priests, like the toys and gewgaws, the prerogatives of the King were, alike, to be consumed in the denunciatory fire of this English Savonarola. And paper prayers, words straightly stuck in a pinfold of set uniformity, made an additional dry fuel. Away with the old mass-book done into English!

It was the chaff the Anglicans and Presbyters had fed the people,—their urgency to an unquestioning obedience and feckless humility that had degraded them. The resulting bestiality, Milton deemed a justification for the erection of that autocracy he served. The natural disposition of an Englishman was not towards "low defection and debasement of mind." The idolatry they had been schooled to in the churches had induced in them an idolatry of

the King,—the *Eikon Basiliké* Milton was attempting to destroy.

His mistakes of method and of judgment appear in the light of history so glaring that sometimes it is difficult to see how Milton could have esteemed his actions righteous. But that he did do so, the sincerity and frequent exaltation of his prose give proof. Foul means seemed fair if they could bring in their wake the sunlight of a restoration of England's liberties.

The commission to answer *Eikon Basiliké* was not, perhaps, a wise one. The repetitious blows against the carcass of the King were strangely vivifying. The past cannot bury its dead so long as the present insists on belaboring them. Milton's work advanced, rather than deterred, the efforts of the Royalists to esteem the first Charles alive as a living saint, so that the cause might not lose prestige under the exclusive leadership of that merry and astute sinner, who signed himself as Charles the Second.

But though Milton's pamphlet was not as efficacious for party warfare as the Commonwealth had hoped and though it does not attain such greatness as to make it generally honored by a critical posterity, it still is praiseworthy. Unworldly priests, unfettered prayers, a Sabbath free from "dominical jigs and maypoles," the rule of reason,—the enacted reason of a parliament, the mutual observance of the social contract by the ruler and the ruled, his praise of these, often wings Milton's words to a purer air than that exchange of hot breath that passes in a controversy.

There is an ethereal quality of abstract appreciation in the comparison of truth and justice by this pamphleteer, who had not scrupled to disregard both in more mundane passages:

Truth is but justice in our knowledge and justice is but truth in our practice. . . . Truth is properly no more than contemplation; and her utmost efficiency is but teaching: but justice in her very essence is all strength and activity; and hath a sword put into her hand, to use against all violence and oppression on the earth. . . . She is the strength, the kingdom, the power, and the majesty of all ages.

And for the application: It was the sword of justice which had delivered the nation from the captivity of Kings. It was Milton's purpose to set free the minds of Englishmen from longing to return. In his conception, the writing of *Eikonoklastes* was not so much the fulfilling of a commission assigned the Secretary of Foreign Tongues as it was the carrying forward of his work of liberation. In this abides whatever justification may exist for the dubiety of his methods.

CHAPTER XI

DEFENDER OF THE COMMONWEALTH

IN November of 1649, it was ordered by the Council that Milton should have the lodgings in Whitehall that had been vacated by a member of Parliament, Sir John Hippisley. The Tudor palace with its private gardens, courts and galleries stretched from Charing Cross to Westminster. The apartments assigned to Milton were in the north end and across from his residence in Spring Gardens. He had not far to move. From the windows of the new abode, his little daughters could watch the shifting, busy concourse on the street below, the while Milton translated foreign tongues to English for the Parliament men and turned the English of political dispatches into the dignified Latin that brought esteem to the Republic.

Sometimes at the Council's request, he examined the papers of recalcitrant printers or of Royalists to whom there came news of the mission of Montrose to the northern countries or of Rupert's depredations off the coasts of Spain and Portugal. The dispatches that he indited for the Council were not numerous. Monarchs were reluctant to initiate negotiations with regicides, and in many states, it was believed the Republic would be of brief duration. Scores of refugees made this their chorus. Best, then, befriend Charles Stuart and gain at his accession treaties of amity and commerce. While the Republic held the strong box, England's neighbors were not averse to pelf and plunder. Spain and Portugal gave ready shelter to Prince Rupert and his ships. Poland imposed a tax on English merchants, turning the proceeds over to the Royalists. The Prince Stadholder of Holland welcomed the

refugees so freely that the Hague assumed the manners of an English capital.

It was probably through this dignitary that Charles II secured as the Continental champion of his cause, Claude de Saumaise, the most renowned Latinist in Europe, then a professor at the University of Leyden. The Frenchman, though infirm and aged, was redoubtable in controversy and of a hot pride and temper that had lost him friends among his colleagues. His smooth Latin was attuned to the ears of princes,—free of those idioms that perplex all but true scholars, ample in erudition, sleek with compliments, a courtier's robe to swathe the barbed wit of his fancy and apparel suitably the dignity of his learning.

At the expense of Charles,¹ he published and dedicated to that Prince the *Defensio Regia pro Carolo I contra Populum Anglicanum*. Though Saumaise, or Salmasius, did not append his name to the volume, it was given immediate acclaim as his by all the Royalists. Its four hundred and forty-four pages were written to convince Europe that the leaders of the Commonwealth should be pursued by fire and sword, not only by those who ruled by royal right, but by the magistrates of all republics. The illegality of the King's trial and execution, the subsequent rule of the "Forty Tyrants" of the Council by strength of armed support, he contrasted with the rule of the King and the exclusion of his defrauded son,—shunning no more to condemn the men of the Commonwealth than to belaud the profligate Prince, who paid for the book's publication. Through many pages he excoriated the enormity of the execution of the King, discussing the horror and illegality of regicide in general and regicide in England in particular. Such conviction he claimed to entertain for the righteousness of his cause that he wished to plead it before all the world, with history sitting in judgment. He would proclaim the impiety, perfidy and cruelty of the King's enemies to Heaven and earth and dismiss them to posterity as convicted culprits.

The fame of the author, the interest in his subject and the in-

fluence of the Refugees combined to give the book, immediately, wide circulation. The Agents, who represented the Commonwealth abroad, encountered a more noticeable hostility and warned their government of the damage done their cause. Commissioners of Customs were instructed to search ships from the Netherlands for the volume and to send what copies they found to the Council of State. The Company of Stationers, also, was apprised of the seditious character of the book. There must be no translation or printing of it in England.²

On January 8, 1650, the Council directed that Mr. Milton prepare and bring before them an answer to the attack of Salmasius. Until that should be ready, Orders show that the Council was diligent in aiding the distribution throughout England of Milton's *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* and the *Eikonoklastes*, which the government printers brought out in new editions. But however well these works might serve as correctives at home, their influence on the Continent would be negligible. They were not written in Latin.

The task John Milton was given was to his liking. He was convinced of the justice of his cause and confident of the richness and pliability of his Latin. He, too, as much as Salmasius, desired the world as audience. Salmasius's book had the start, and it was not that its gait was more rapid than the ambling mule of a churchman, but Milton intended to go slowly. He read and reread Plautus to increase the store of his invectives. He searched the Scriptures and the classics for quotations that would aptly whet his arguments; he studied and restudied the rodomontade of his adversary, giving each paragraph and chapter such consideration as would enable him to match and answer every point of the King's champion.

There was much, beside this, to be done. He translated a letter to Philip IV, accrediting Anthony Ascham as agent of the Commonwealth. Hyde and other Royalists were in Madrid. It was hoped no credence would be accorded their calumnies. He

translated an address to the free City of Dantzic, petitioning that it levy no such unjust tax on the English merchants as that by which Poland aided the Royalists. He protested to the Hanse town of Hamburg that English merchants there had been prevented from taking the Engagement of Allegiance to the Commonwealth. The Senate and Burgomasters should not let vagabond Scots govern their city. He translated letters to foreign courts, requesting that they refuse credentials of pretended ambassadors sent them by Charles Stuart. Portugal was urged to close her harbors to pirates and deserters. The better to represent this need, Charles Vane, a brother of Sir Harry's, was accredited to King John. Milton arranged for the speedy printing of a book that would recall to the English the bloody massacre of Protestants in Ireland. At Newgate, he visited Dugard, the printer of *Eikon Basiliké* and the book of Salmasius, and strove to aid the persuasion of prison in winning him to the Commonwealth.

These things he did for the assistance of the Council, proving himself in all so serviceable that the Royalist Mercury, *Pragmaticus*, suggested that he be given further duties, that he be made justice of a court of bustle and pretense for settling divers cases,—this Mr. Milton, “who holds forth the Doctrine of Divorce and, like a state champion, shamed himself with handling his pen to oppose those divine meditations of our late King of happy memory.”³ The Royalists asserted that in the *Eikonoklastes*, he had berated the King for plagiarism because of a prayer that the Regicides, themselves, had interpolated in the King's Book. This, Milton denied, expanding in the new edition the passage concerning his original claim and heightening his vehemence as answer to the latest libel of “a crew of lurking railers.” But searching fines, imprisonment and flogging served, for the most part, to keep from the press the scandal that was whispered. Milton wrote no pamphlet to defend himself. He would argue his case in his answer to Salmasius. In that, it must be

shown that England's champion was worthy as well as valiant.

At evening, freed from the duties of his secretaryship, he groped his fumbling way to the papers on Salmasius, working painfully by candle light. And at dawn, while Whitehall was very still, Milton took up his work again. And constantly, his light grew dimmer. One eye was gone and he consulted with physicians to search out remedies that would strengthen his vision for his so arduous labor. They told him that his constant reading and his writing would blind him surely and very soon. He had so loved the sunlight, at Cambridge, at Horton,—in Italy. But sunlight one could live without. There was a ghost now to be laid,—the shade of a King, who had left a Banquet House to step upon a scaffold. From where John Milton wrote, one could imagine the shadowy outlines still in silhouette against the sky. The scaffold of the King had been close to Milton's Whitehall apartments; the execution of the King had touched very closely his own life. Men had acted in heat and anger in defense of it. None so valiantly as Milton had acclaimed it on the printed page. And again would he do so, though it cost the boon of eyesight. To defend the Commonwealth of England, to bring the sunlight of a restored liberty to its people, that was worth the imprisonment of darkness.

While he wrote, there was revived in London the old scandal of Milton's advocacy of divorce. Such a one as he, the Royalists sneered, was a fit advocate of Cromwell. Such a one as he could not succeed in shattering the image of the sainted King. He was of that company whom Salmasius had derided as lacking in all reverence, one who would use kings' heads for balls and crowns for spinning tops,—inhuman, a kind of cattle. Not the success of Cromwell in Ireland, not weapons of steel nor apparatus of war, could prevail against the detraction and envy of the Commonwealth. This, Milton set down in the preface to the work he was writing against Salmasius. England had need of a scribe, and a worthy one.

In February of 1659, he took oath with other officials on the renewal of their appointments by the Council, promising "in the sight of God, that through his grace," he would be faithful to his trust. There was more work of the kind to which he had become accustomed: letters to English agents beyond the seas, translations of dispatches regarding the exploits of Blake and Popham, the negotiation of treaties.

The constant effort to keep in sturdy motion the mechanism of the Empire shaped Milton's thoughts to vastness. Certain intangibles, perhaps, he conceived less clearly. That England be esteemed and feared by her neighbors seemed to him of more consequence than that she render universal justice at all times to her subjects. And, surely, security must precede the grant of liberty. He took, as friends, men who were interested in events, rather than in the spirit that animated them: Willaim Dugard, the Royalist printer, released from Newgate to be servant of the Commonwealth; the scholar-sot, John Hall, and his fellow editor, Marchmont Needham. This Needham, too, was lately come from Newgate. He had been at one time *Brittanicus* and served the Parliament, then the Royalist, *Pragmaticus*, and now was ready to wear the colors of the Council. A mercurial turn-coat of a Mercury! His constancy was in his verve and gayety. He had a ready wit and a good nose to scent out spicy news that London liked for seasoning.

In June of 1650, he was given the editorship of *Mercurius Politicus*⁴ and boasted that he had become the Parliament's jester and that he had authority to set a fashion of his own. The first edition of his newsbook contained the intelligence of the week, beginning June 6, 1650. Parliament's Mercury was without rhyme or woodcut and had fewer bawdy jokes than had the papers of the Royalists. With the Republic, poesy was in disrepute. It was thought she had consorted somewhat too freely with the Cavaliers. Sometimes, the pages of *Politicus* were sobered by Biblical quotations but, for the most part, it strove rather

to impart news than righteousness. Its editor's courtesy and sweet reasonableness towards the Cavaliers implied a wish to win them over. It was the Presbyterians who suffered most from his railings. England was at war with the Scots. The month *Politicus* appeared, Milton was asked to translate into Latin the declaration as to its causes. That the Scottish rovers on the Continent might not have a monopoly on the misrepresentations of proceedings, there was published at this time a journal in French, *Les Nouvelles Ordinaires de Londres*. It was of only four pages so that it came to be called a paper, rather than a newsbook. Its editor was that same Wm. Dugard, once Master of the Merchant Tailors' School, who had published for the Royalists and been imprisoned by the party which now he served.

At the time that Parliament gained assistance from these paper allies, the Royalists lost their last journalist. John Crouch, railing editor of *The Man in the Moon*, who had endeavored to discover to England her crimes and follies, was sentenced, in June of 1650, to imprisonment. Never, even in the days of King Charles, had the press been so exclusively the weapon of a faction. The Commonwealth appreciated thoroughly the advantage for itself of propaganda and the danger of the propaganda of the enemies. But she could not free from secretarial labors her greatest champion. The excellence of his Latin was a trump card against those who claimed the upstart Republic was the work of ignorant rebels.

His dignified protests were dispatched to Spain in connection with the assassination of the Commonwealth's agent, Anthony Ascham. Ascham's assassins had claimed the right of sanctuary and, except in the case of one Protestant among them, the government had allowed it. England's rebuke is of such eloquence as to suggest that Milton, himself, composed it. Testimony had been taken in regard to uprisings in Kent and Essex. It was felt that none could abstract this so clearly for the Council's convenience as could John Milton.

From the sale of the King's goods, he was granted hangings sufficient for the furnishing of his lodgings at Whitehall. They were pleasant to the touch and they must have given joy to his wife and daughters. He could but dimly see their patterns. But one must work if he would justify the awards of the Council, the title of the son of Bread Street's scrivener to royal housing and to royal hangings.

In accordance with the Ordinance of August, 1650, he should have compounded for the Wheatley property from which he drew revenue in respect to the debt left unpaid by Richard Powell. He neglected this. There was no time for private business. Added to other affairs, he was assigned with two others the task of listing the records, writings and papers of the Assembly of the Synod so that nothing might be filched from them and that they would be in good order for the use of Parliament.

He physicked his eyes, but the medicines that he used were deleterious. Towards the end of the year, Prince Rupert's sails were forced from the Atlantic by the valorous Blake. It was Milton who translated the thanks of the Council to the Governor of Andalusia, for his assistance to the conquerors. Blake's prowess determined the Portuguese to send an emissary to England. Whether he came as ambassador, envoy or agent must be determined, for the Commonwealth did not wish to accord him ampler honors than were his deserts. There were diplomatic queries as to this that Milton must translate. There were requests that Portugal make reparation for the damage she had done in succoring the rebels.

And finally the dearer labor was completed. The answer to Salmasius was dutifully submitted in manuscript for the Council's approval. On the twenty-third of December, it was ordered that the treatise be printed. The last day of the month, saw its entry at Stationers' Hall by William Dugard for his copyright. There it was registered as *Joannis Miltoni, Angli, pro Populo Anglicano Defensio contra Claudii Salmasii Defensionem*

Regiam. Had the title been very brief and printed in much bolder type, it could not have been read by the dimmed eyes of the Secretary of Foreign Tongues.

The book began its circulation when the Royalists were rejoicing over the coronation of Charles II at Scone. Officially, it was accounted Milton's foremost service to the Commonwealth. Its author had accomplished what he had attempted. Today, the work cannot be esteemed as justifying the blinding price paid for its composition. It has been said that the two doughty champions, Milton and Salmasius, hurled Latin dictionaries at each other's heads by way of argument. Certainly, had Milton's arsenal been half so full of arguments as it was of epithets, Salmasius would have been routed utterly in half a dozen pages. The elder scholar, Milton had been told, was effeminate and suffered under a shrewish wife. He is berated in Latin as a he-wolf, impregnated by a she-wolf, a French kind of a half-man with a man-wife attached. He had at one time condemned the Bishops, whom as the champion of Charles, he praised. Milton denounced him as a sneak and turncoat, a raving, distracted cuckoo. He is scored for his false Latinity, for his meddling with the affairs of a nation not his own, and for having received pay so to do.

To Milton, a gorgeously abusive epithet seemed more devastating to his adversary's reasoning than did a well considered argument. We of the twentieth century have found that greater venom can be injected by subtly insinuating the knavery of political enemies, the while we address them as the Honorable Member from such a shire or the Honorable Gentleman from such a state. Our method is not so racy but is more effective. Equally in favor with abuse, as a political argument, was the catching up of his opponent in a false quotation, some furtive barbarism in a Latin sentence or some ludicrous mistake in an allusion to natural phenomena. . . . "Your king was most unjustly murdered," says the one. "Have at you!," says the other, "you

have misused an ablative." Also, of a fashion not current in this day, is the buttressing of argument by the use of Scripture,—the Scripture of the Old Testament. Since the Old Testament was written at different times and by different men, representing various types of civilization, it has been found to accommodate itself to arguments utterly contradictory, the one to the other. The result is, quite naturally, that a sustaining passage drawn from its great treasury is no longer regarded, except by groping jurors and dozing congregations, as the acme of the irrefutable. Next in authority to the Scriptures were the examples and precedents of the Ancients. Milton quotes from Greek and Latin dramatists, historians, jurists and orators, and adds to these the Fathers of the Church and the early law-givers of England. Even with such stores to draw from, he is sometimes forced to severe straits to explain away some of the arguments Salmasius has drawn from the wealth of his own erudition. It cannot be said that the expedients he resorts to are always successful.

There is such a constant popping of epithets, such a thundering of authorities, such salvos of denunciation and invective, that sometimes one must listen intently to hear the still, small voice of Milton's reason. To his contemporaries, doubtless, this clamor seemed the chiefest value of his efforts. Milton's ridicule of Salmasius made that scholar appear a pettifogging rhetorician, who had floundered into a morass of politics to gather there the coins Charles Stuart flung him. He, who had seemed the wonder of Europe, was dwarfed to a doddering figure in a dressing gown, who feared his wife and fumbled in his Latin. Hobbes said of the work of the two controversialists, "Both are very good Latin, so that I know not which is best, and both are very bad reasoning, so that I know not which is worst."

Rather, it seems that Milton's reasoning is good, and that, too, of Salmasius, if one can agree to their several premises. These are dubious. Salmasius had argued that regicide was unlawful, and particularly so in England, because of that country's laws

and traditions; that Charles I had been a worthy King and that he had been illegally tried and executed; that the Army, Council and Parliament, then ruling England, had supplanted the legal government by a tyranny. Milton argued that because of Mary Stuart's intrigue with David Rizzio, the hereditary right of Charles to rule was questionable. James I was more probably Rizzio's son than Darnley's. Milton claimed that Charles had begun his reign by mutilating the coronation oath and shielding from trial his father's murderer, the Duke of Buckingham; that this protection implied that Charles himself had been privy to his father's poisoning. Milton traversed the familiar ground of the King's political offenses; his illegal exactions, his use of force against the Parliament, his support of a corrupting and corrupted National Church; his effort to impose Uniformity, not only on England, but on Scotland; his complicity in the massacre of Protestants in Ulster; and his effort to bring in Scotch and Irish forces for the subjugation of London. In summary, the King had attempted by every means he could to stifle liberty.

The Presbyterians had been, at first, his greatest foes, but when they had succeeded in gorging themselves with pluralities and come to the enjoyment of the sins and wealth the Bishops had possessed, they had wished to stem the tide and retain the King. Revolt was righteous, just and lawful. The laws of God and Nature were the same. Of these, the most supreme was the safeguarding of the people. Whatsoever things were for the universal good of the whole state, those things were lawful and just. Charles, as any other King, ruled only on the people's sufferance, —his power being a thing delegated and not inherent in himself. The acts of his reign and his refusal to make adequate concessions, even in his extremities, condemned him as a tyrant, —outside the law. For trial of the King by peers could only mean trial by tyrants, a manifest absurdity. In the court, which the people's representatives had constituted, he had received more consideration than he merited. If certain judges were not present

at the sessions, this showed them derelict in their duty. Their absence did not invalidate the court.

As for the part the Army had taken in these affairs, it had been summoned to London by the people's representatives convened in Parliament, and had performed signal service in quelling the uproar of the King's party that might have invaded the House. Milton praised the soldiers for courage and moderation. The leaders were infinitely to be preferred to the defeated officers of the King, the turncoat Presbyterians and the London handicraftsmen. The party administering the government that Salmasius had attacked was that of the Independents, a party that had been consistent in their demands, using victory to good advantage. One can imagine that a Cavalier in reading these statements must have said again and again, "Untrue, that is not true!"

Milton, himself, was not convinced of the eternal rightness of the régime under which he wrote. That it was legal, he was satisfied. It was an elected parliament, or senate, superior in power to any king by right of the law of nature, and superior to the laws of the land, since these they could confirm or repeal. But to not all the parliament or senate does Milton attribute equal power. It is the better or sounder part of them in which true power resides. This argument was useful in that it justified Pride's Purge and the intimidation of electors by armed forces. For Milton held that the Independents were as sagacious as they were strong.

Magistrates were necessary for the governance of a people since the majority were weak and lacking in wisdom. The law of reason and the law of God concurred, hence the institution of Magistrates was by right divine, to the end that mankind might live under certain laws and be governed by them. In England, the people's reason had been debauched by the King and the Bishops. Milton, never a democrat, confessed that there were very few who were either desirous of liberty or capable of

using it. These people could rightly be governed by a King, were the King a Christian conceiving of himself as a public servant. By the law of nature, only those should rule who excelled in wisdom and courage. It was the right of every one to remove from kingship those who lacked these qualities. And as for tyrants, they could be lawfully put to death, condemned or uncondemned. *The Defence*, it will be remembered, was written in Latin for the consumption of the Continent. One can imagine what a stir was caused by this prevision of the philosophy of the eighteenth century.

Such kings as Milton accorded the right to rule were rare. He preferred, then, a republic to a monarchy. In his country, he acknowledged, a heavy yoke had been laid upon the nation, but he contended that it was offensive only to those who needed its restraint. The form of the Commonwealth was such as was suitable to the times, such as disaffection made necessary,—one not patterned for the contentment of theorists. Of a republic, laboring against the resistance of factions so that it had to defend itself by arms, no more could be expected than that it should take account of the sound and right-minded part of its citizens. The others, of whatever rank, must be passed over and excluded.

Milton was following in the easy path of others, who, idealists when out of office, exalt expediency above all else when they attain to power. He reasoned thus: a government that is not efficient cannot carry through its policies. A government, to be efficient in a country where great numbers of the citizens were still blinded by political and religious superstitions, must be strong. The deeds of peace that were to be accomplished offered a greater test of strength than deeds of war. It was unthinkable that they could be performed by "Charles the Less" and his band of profligate refugees.

Under the regimen of the Republic, men would come to know that kingship was not necessary. Whosoever learned that he was not born for his prince, but for God and his country, made of

himself a citizen, honest, wise and learned. Militant against such citizenship was Roman Catholicism. This, Milton classified, not as a religion, but as a heretical tyranny, which had usurped so much of civil power that it was dangerous. Therefore, from the religious toleration that he wished to see established, he excluded Roman Catholics. These were not to be permitted to retard the work of the most valiant Cromwell and the generals and councilors, who had piously broken the power of the King. These men, Milton adjures to confute the evil words of Salmasius by the wisdom of their deeds.

Their champion had praised the government, not as Secretary for Foreign Tongues, but as an English citizen and scribe. Some few there had been in the past who could nobly recount the deeds of heroes and of potent states. Milton aspired to be their peer, depending not on the long apprenticeship of his youth and not on his abilities. To vindicate the work of the Commonwealth, he invoked the aid of the Most High God. Those, whom with divine assistance he praised, should justify his praise by justice, temperance and moderation. Should they abuse their power, Milton threatened that he would confess the justice of their critics. God's displeasure would fall upon them in equal measure as had fallen, previously, His blessings.

The parliamentary newsbook, *Mercurius Politicus*, in its issue of January 23, 1651, reported that the *Defence* was in the press. At the University of Leyden and at the Hague, Milton's volume was eagerly awaited. Introduced officially by England's envoys and agents in March and April, it was soon in circulation and won much admiration. There was sent to *Mercurius Politicus* the following newsletter from Amsterdam, bearing the date of April 7:

Milioni Defensionem pro Populo Anglicano, I got here lately and perused it with much satisfaction. Tomorrow, God willing, I send it to a Councillor of the Elector of Brandenburg. The author, it seems, is a man of singular parts, acuteness and solidity. Some may, per-

haps, find fault with the personal jerks therein; but the least review of Salmasius will show he tuned the echo to such a key. I am sure if he lives yet he will find work enough, and tough, to disentangle himself handsomely in the main.

Nicolas Heinsius⁵ wrote from Holland that there were four editions in a few months, beside the one from England. A Dutch translation gave it circulation among the unlettered.

The volume reached Salmasius at the court of Queen Christina, whither he had gone in answer to her plea that she could not be happy without him. Although the young Queen had dignified her court with an amazing number of grammarians, philosophers, astrologers and critics, she had bestowed especial honors on Salmasius. When he fell ill, for her hospitality was excessive for the aged scholar, she came to his apartments. She jested with him, teased him and they laughed together,—the prodigal Queen and Europe's prodigy of learning.

Isaac Voss, the English agent at Stockholm, on receipt of Milton's book, lent it forthwith to Salmasius's patron. She expressed herself as pleased, not only with the matter of Milton's discourse, but with his style. The gibes against Salmasius were well suited to her own rough humor. She wished to know more of this English champion. The uncle of Voss was Francis Junius, long the librarian of the Earl of Arundel. He knew Milton well and so could describe him as of gentle birth, could write that he had studied under Thomas Young and was affable and endowed with many virtues. Such data found its way into so many letters that the author, as well as his work, came to be known on the Continent.

The fact that, in 1651, the arms of the Commonwealth were successful on sea and land, accounts, perhaps, in part for the amount and fervor of the praise Milton received in London. He has recorded that hardly did the book appear when every foreigner there resident, whether ambassador, envoy or agent, tendered his congratulations. By the end of the year, Cromwell had

been successful in Ireland. The battle of Dunbar had been fought. Worcester had followed and settled the score so definitely that Cromwell had been able to establish himself at Whitehall. He ruled the entire state and it seemed that Blake might rule the seas in England's interests. There was applause for the Commonwealth, all the more vigorous because it had been dangerously delayed. To the doubting, the assurance of the stability of the republic was an increasingly potent argument for its righteousness.

It accorded well with circumstance that at this time a scholar ably argued the cause of the Republic. One could not congratulate Cromwell for the Drogheda massacre or Blake for sinking the galleons of Spain. One could praise Milton's redoubtable *Defence*. The vigor of his Latin Billingsgate⁶ and the eloquence of his commendations showed him, like Blake and Cromwell, to be as undesirable an enemy as he was desirable a friend. Such opinion was confirmed by the republication at this time of *Eikōnoklastes* in English and in French.

Royalist hatred became more fervent. It may be gaged by the reception of Milton's volume. In Holland, a reply was submitted to Ludovic Elzevir for printing. So replete was it with scurrility that it was suppressed by public authority. At Toulouse, the *Defence* was burned by the hangman at the instance of that city's parliament. In Paris, also, due to clerical influence, it was burned. And this was its fate at Ratisbon. Heinsius claimed that the flames imparted to the book a "certain wonderful increase of lustre." The Roman Catholic Church paid it the honor of listing it on the Index. Royalists in London had to bide their time for the book's punishment. The Earl of Bridgewater remembered that once he had enacted the rôle of "elder brother" in a courtly masque. Its author had been the same Milton who bespattered the robes of the dead King. "*Liber igni, author furca, dignissimi,*" is the inscription the Earl wrote in his copy of the *Defence*.

Salmasius found the favors of Christina less abundant.⁷ The most audacious parts of Milton's reply were quoted against him by the ribald courtiers. They but followed the lead of the Queen, who had found a rich and peculiar amusement in the discomfiture of the pompous savant. He spoke, now, in familiar fashion with the humblest serving man and blustered that he would send Milton and his parliament to perdition. He was always about to castigate in print the English "schoolmaster." His delays made his clamor the more amusing.

Mercurius Politicus did not leave the English in ignorance of the slights Salmasius had received nor of the reason for them. In September of 1651, the government newsbook recounted that Salmasius had been cashiered, for the liberal Queen had found him to be a pernicious parasite and promoter of tyranny. His return to his duties at the University of Leyden, which his friends more truly gave as his reason for leaving Stockholm, was not a happy one. The Republican party had become supreme in Holland and desired friendly relations with England. Further sale of Salmasius's attack had been forbidden. He found that the gibes of his adversary were well relished by his colleagues and there was mockery for the efforts he had made to play the courtier.

Milton's nephew, Edward Phillips, so embroidered the story of his inglorious withdrawal from Sweden as to ascribe to the alleged dismissal fatal consequence. This was exaggeration. But it was a death blow to pride that the Swedish Court and the University of Leyden should see the "kill cow" of Europe depicted as no more than a faulty Latinist, hen-pecked and indeterminate of sex. He published no more against the Commonwealth.

Others took up the cudgels for the Royalists. At Antwerp an expatriated Englishman, J. Rowland, answered Milton with *Pro Rege et Populo Anglicano*,⁸ claiming the Commonwealth's defender was a roaring lion, whose will it was to devour all kings.

A little later, there was published in Dublin a pretended vindication of Charles against the assaults of Milton. Such pamphlets by their weakness accentuated the service its secretary had rendered to the Commonwealth. The Council considered his labor worthy a special mark of gratitude.

It would seem from their Order Book that they debated the amount of money that should be given Milton as reward. Two hundred pounds was tentatively agreed upon but the debate continued. It was remembered that their champion had scored Salmasius for having taken the Jacobuses of Charles Stuart for the defense of his father. To reward Milton with money might be a disservice, since, were it known, his enemies would be furnished with excellent ammunition. Besides, it was understood that pamphlet writing was a part of Mr. Milton's duty as a Secretary. A handsome expression of gratitude spread on the Order Book would be both dignified and economical. As a result of these deliberations, one may read that

The Council, taking note of the many good services performed by Mr. John Milton, their Secretary for Foreign Languages to this State of Commonwealth, particularly for his book in vindication of the Parliament and people of England against the calumnies and invectives of Salmasius, have thought fit to declare their resentment and good acceptance of the same, and that the thanks of the Council be returned to Mr. Milton, and their sense represented in their behalf.⁹

That fame which he had long desired was now his own. It did not alter his manner towards his fellowmen, for he had long held himself in high esteem, nor did it mollify in any way the harshness of his criticism. He had paid for his fame. It was not an unlooked for, undeserved reward that he should bow and scrape to. He gave the world more than he gained from it and he was having to learn to expect from it even less,—to look inward and evoke memories and imagination. It pleased him to think that he found more of beauty within than he had found

without, when both his eyes had been his faithful servants. He would still render that service at Whitehall for which the Council honored him, but the priest and prophet that cohabited in Milton's body with the Latin Secretary would gain, through darkness, the cloister that was needed for development.

A foreign visitor¹⁰ in London, calling on Milton, as did all foreigners in 1651, found him affable in conversation but harsh in criticism, when talk turned to those with whom he disagreed. In this visitor's *Album Amicorum*, Milton's amanuensis was directed to write in Greek for his indomitable master,

I am made perfect through weakness.

CHAPTER XII

LICENSER OF THE PRESS

BECAUSE the victories of Cromwell and the success of Blake at sea remained unwelcome news to many of the English, however much they might bring recognition and respect from foreign nations, the question of propaganda was to remain a perplexing concern for the duration of the Republic. Suppression of the newsbooks and ballads of the Cavaliers left a clear field for writers of the Commonwealth. Sentences at Newgate added to their company the chastened authors, who had previously railed and argued as their adversaries. The flogging of hawkers and Mercury women cleared the air of Saint Paul's of the voices that cried the news of the Royalist exploits and sang the jests of the merry exile whom many called King Charles.

From the press of the government, there came a succession of publications, which, "by authority," apprised the people of the affairs of the nation. The warlike tracts of John Milton, their pages smelling of king's blood, were balanced weightily against the heavy erudition of Salmasius, whose pages reeked in like degree of midnight oil. Broadsheets were published for an audience that mourned its ballads. They listed with fatalistic reiteration the misfortunes of the Cavaliers,—death in battle, wounds, imprisonment.¹ Fifty of the ancestors of Charles II had suffered violent deaths. The news was decked out with a gruesome skeleton, crowned, sceptered and orbéd,—a macabre cartoon that, had the Scottish King been timorous, must have given him pause. Broadsheets, listing a hundred victories at sea and over three hundred on land, exhibited with confidence the predilections of

Providence in England's struggles. Noll's face, knobbed with warts, was offered to blot out the image of the King at prayer.

For weekly consumption there were the government's newsbooks, the impersonal *Diurnall*, giving a day to day account of legislative happenings, and *Mercurius Politicus*, a Thursday visitor more to the people's liking. This last was of two sheets of paper, folded into quarto pages, stitched together and unbound. *Mercurius Politicus* had inherited along with the author of the defunct *Brittanicus*, his cap and bells. Marchmont Needham was a journalist with a coat of many colors that he could shift so that the color of the reigning party was always uppermost. Hawk-nosed, short-sighted, and with dangling earrings, he could bend his thin body with the weather-cocks and greet, with an engaging readiness, the winds of fortune. He had inaugurated the newsbook with a jingling wit more characteristic of "Rattle-heads" than Roundheads. His scurrilities against the Scots soon brought upon him a severe drubbing from the Royalist poet, Clivecland, who in *The Character of Mercurius Politicus* described him as "a salt extracted out of whatever books have been burnt by the hangman." Needham's series had been discontinued and, it would seem, that John Hall had been for a short time, substituted as author or editor.

In the fall of 1650, the tone of the paper sobered, as though it had been decided to seek reasoned approval, rather than laughing popularity. There was then an endeavor to prove by fifteen reasons that a free state or government by the people, settled in due and orderly succession, is the most excellent form of government. The series, it would seem, was by a member of the Council,—Marten, or some other who had been entrusted with the responsibility of the newsbook during the time when Hall attended Cromwell from early September of 1650 to the end of the year. *Politicus* was still wrestling valorously with this thesis when the newsbook came under the guidance of a champion more famous.

As soon as Milton had seen his *Defence* safely launched, he was given the licensing of *Politicus*,—a supervisory power which he exercised without detriment to his conscience and with benefit to the newsbook. The first copy of his licensing was the thirty-fifth issue, published February 6, 1651. Proof sheets were brought to Milton for approval. He doubtless talked with Needham and with Hall of the paper's policy, pointed their paragraphs and sometimes, it appears, enriched the issues with the powerful prose that was the contribution of his left hand to the Commonwealth.

He was so conscientious as to safeguard the tone of the newsbook through a close supervision of its scanty advertisements. Those who wished to regain, by such means, their stolen horses or runaway apprentices found themselves excluded. The advertisements show that Milton approved the reading of histories, biographies and tractates on religion. The endorsement of an advertisement was extended, also, to a work on physics by a Moravian scholar. Milton was ill and the interest he took in his frail body caused him to permit the publication of two treatises on medicine and surgery. One wonders whether it was these books that he rifled of their secrets in order to treat his eyes. Milton so far recovered from his spleen against the author of Pamela's prayer as to permit an advertisement of a biography of Sir Philip Sidney by Fulke Greville, Lord Brook.

Politicus commended, also, a reprint of *A True Relation of the Barbarous Proceedings of the Dutch against the English at Amboyna*. The Dutch Ambassador requested that its editor be punished. The book was better adapted to inflame the English than was even Holland's treaty with Denmark, by which the two were pledged to the maintenance of their interests in the Baltic against the Commonwealth. This was in 1651, the year of England's Navigation Act for the ruination of Dutch commerce. The Ambassador's request was ineffective.

Mercurius Politicus.

Comprising the summe of all Intelligence, with the Affairs and Designs
now on foot in the three Nations of
England, Ireland, and Scotland.

In defence of the Common-wealth, and
for Information of the People.

— *Isa vertere Seria.* Flor. de
Ar. Poet.

From *Thursday*, January 15. to *Thursday*, January 22. 1652.

TO go on upon our old Subject of a *free-State*
or *Government by the People*, as it is constituted in a *due and orderly succession* of their *supreme Assemblies*; and to prove its excellency above all other Forms, wee shall make matters yet more evident by *Reason*.

A *Tenth Reason* is, because under this Government, the People are ever endued with a more Magnanimous, active, & noble Temper of spirit, then under the grandeur of any *standing Power* whatsoever. And this ariseth from that apprehension which every particular man hath of his owne immediate share in the *publick Interest*, as well as of that security which he possesseth in the enjoyment of his *private Fortune*, free from the reach of any *arbitrary Power*. Hence it is, that whensoever any good success or happiness betides the Publick, every one counts it his own; If the Commonwealth conquer, thrive in Dominion, wealth, or honour, he reckons all don for himself; If he see distributions of honour, high

Hhhhhhhh

Offices,

TITLE PAGE OF *MERCURIUS POLITICUS*

Title page of Number 85 of *Mercurius Politicus*, the Newsbook which for a time was Published under the Supervision of Milton. Reproduced from an issue in the Widener Library, Harvard University

In the composition of the newsbook, Milton effected little change. The precursors of today's editorials or leaders were the short essays that served the "preambular" purpose of introducing the real body of the news. One important deviation from the practice of Hall and Needham was probably introduced by Milton. For since *Politicus* was the spokesman of the Commonwealth and since, perhaps, Milton wished to show that his own licensing was not a mere matter of form, it gradually became customary to expand the first person singular into the plural in writing the opening paragraphs. This editorial "we," copied by the long-lived *Gazette*, was carried over into the Restoration and came to be generally adopted. There were no headlines, although an approach to these appears in the large type in which late news was published. Acts of Parliament, proclamations, and the like, are printed in Old English.

Evidences of Milton's journalism best appear in the stately passages which he either wrote or inspired in early recognition of the power of the press. One thinks the influence of Milton is apparent in the thirty-ninth issue, March 6, 1651, when *Politicus* exhorts England to assume her destined rôle upon the Continent:

The Majesty of England, (though now diffused in the hands of many) is the same it was, when in the hands of one; and is indeed much more majestic now, than it hath been for many hundred years past, being regulated and supported by the Arm of heaven, as also by wise Councils and victorious armies, free from the check of any single tyrant. How much therefore doth it concern the wisdom of this Commonwealth, to consult with terms of honor in all actions and addresses both at home and abroad. It was a saying of the Duke of Rohan, that England is a mighty Animal which can never die, except it kill itself; and I may say that I look upon England, in the posture it now stands in, as a mighty animal indeed, if it knew its own strength; and such a one as might make itself felt (if not master, yet) grand arbitrator of affairs in Europe.

The force of Milton's genius does not permeate the newsbook and there is no single article that one can safely say was written by his hand. And yet one feels the fire of his spirit in the constant exaltation of liberty,—exordia for its attainment, cautions as to its safeguarding, praise for its rare blessings. It flames, too, in the protests against the folly of the Scots in restoring the Stuart dynasty and against the machinations of the Presbyterians and the Jesuits. Sometimes his ardor fans it high into a beacon fire to summon a laggard nation to high emprise. Sometimes it snaps and curls, a dragon's tongue, against the object that it would devour:

Treason is no trifle to be dandled and dallied with, it should be crushed in the egg, it should be destroyed in the root, the seed, the first motion or conception. The very thought and intent of it ought to be unpardonable and could the secrets of men's hearts be arraigned even there it were punishable, because when it comes into act, it blows up all and dissolves the whole frame of human society.

When there is praise to bestow, how bright it gleams, how vividly flattering are its reflections:

Liberty, declared or possessed, is like the Golden Fleece or the Hesperian fruit, watched by Argus his hundred eyes or by ever-wakening dragons.

Newsletters to *Politicus* brought tidings of the enthusiastic reception on the Continent of Milton's *Defence*. They were confirmed by the constant visits and congratulations of foreigners. He was in attendance on the Committee which met with the Portuguese envoy, Guimares, for the drafting of a treaty. Very often after their deliberations, the negotiators and other officials dined together at a common table. Milton by his wit and grace, the prestige he had won abroad and the dignified audacity of his speech, so dominated the board that humbler folk regarded

him as host, and a chaplain of Cromwell's, long time after, asserted this to be the case.

The champion of the Commonwealth was in a position to gain favors and he used his privilege with admirable discretion. A grandson of Spenser's, suffering distress in Ireland, although a member of that Church which Milton most detested, gained relief through the Secretary's good offices, and Sir William Davenant, the Cavalier poet, captured at sea, imprisoned on the Isle of Wight, and brought to trial at London, was released as prisoner at large, due in part to Milton's solicitation.²

They were busy days and proud days for John Milton. The birth of a son in March gave promise of such comradeship in later life as had enriched the days of Milton's father. Milton rejoiced in parenthood. The eyes that could not see looked cleanly forth and did not make his handsome face repulsive. His infirmity won him fresh deference, for it was well known that labors for the Commonwealth against Salmasius had hastened the approach of darkness.

Those dispatches which Milton drafted as Latin Secretary, dispatches so often seeking justice for England's agents or her merchants or demanding reparations for the injuries suffered, due to the harboring and encouragement of Royalists, caused Milton to have tolerance for the retention of high powers by the government. Liberty glimmered still ahead, a bright jewel to be achieved and possessed only by arduous sacrifice and endeavor, not to be expected as a gift. This, *Politicus* strove to explain to his readers in one of its "preambular" discourses late in 1651:

Liberty is the most precious jewel under the sun; and therefore when it is once in possession, it requires more than an ordinary art and industry to preserve it.

It was the Council, not the Parliament, which appreciated Milton's services as licenser. It was that body which determined when Milton's pamphlets should be republished and which

should be translated and distributed abroad. They best could value the increased dignity of their dispatches when these had been transmuted by his labors into stately Latin.

The Parliament did not well understand John Milton. They were angered when he licensed a Racovian catechism and they officially condemned it as Socinian. Milton insisted that there was no reason why the catechism should not be published. To Parliament, he seemed less worthy than the most insignificant of their members. That the world was not of this opinion made it seem the more necessary to uphold the order of their precedence. The Council was lordly and Parliament strove to be so, and had no wish to submit to the smaller body, even though Cromwell, himself, should be among its members. It refused to pay due honor to the Council's Latin Secretary.

Milton's Whitehall lodgings had once been occupied by Sir John Hippisley, M. P. Others, beside Milton, were in occupancy of quarters desired by members of the Parliament. That body had empowered a committee to deal with Whitehall matters and from this committee came demands that the coveted quarters should be immediately vacated. Vaux, who had charge of Whitehall, delivered this order to Milton. The Secretary, in turn, referred the matter to the Council. Orders from Parliament were countered by orders from the Council. Vaux was to forbear moving Milton until two members of the latter body had conferred with the Committee. Parliament's answer was the resolution of May 9, 1651, that the Committee should rid Whitehall, the Mews and Somerset of such people as it saw fit, in order that the Members should have suitable accommodations. Milton, his wife, two daughters and infant son continued in their abode.³

His attendance on the Council was constantly necessary because of the effort then being made to frame a treaty with Portugal. The newsbook of which he was the licenser was arguing valiantly the worthiness of the Republic, and abroad the

Defence had gained its author recognition as England's foremost champion.

On June 11, the Council appointed a new committee of four, any two of whom were to communicate to the Committee of Parliament in regard to the order for Milton's speedy removal out of his lodgings. The basis of the request for his remaining was to be the Council's need of him, rather than the worth of services already rendered. What agreement was arrived at is not known, but Milton continued in the enjoyment of his apartment for several months and housekeeper Vaux was instructed by the Council that he was not to intermeddle in any business above stairs. Between the appointment of the Committee and the instructions to Vaux, Milton had received the formal thanks of the Council for his work against Salmasius.

The dispute as to his lodgings was vexatious. It was paralleled by difficulties with his mother-in-law in respect to the payment of the thirds⁴ due her as dower, and which she desired Milton to grant her annually from the Wheatley property. For this property, he had compounded in accordance with the Act of August, 1650. Unjust exactions made on the estate by the Commonwealth during Powell's lifetime, together with the jointure, which had not been allowed for in reckoning the composition, caused Milton to petition that the fine of £130 for which he had compounded, should be diminished. His claim was disallowed, the Commission holding that he had been under no obligation to pay the thirds to Mrs. Powell. Thereafter, he suspended his payments to her. In March, he completed the payment of the fine upon the estate and the sequestration was ordered suspended. The next month, Mrs. Powell petitioned the Commissioners for Composition that payment of her jointure be resumed. Her request was not granted, for the Commission claimed the many debts on the property precluded any saving of her thirds.

In July, she petitioned again and to the same effect, seeking

support for her plea in the fact that one of her sons, Lieutenant Captain Powell, had been slain in Scotland under General Monk in service of the Commonwealth. A note appended by her agent represented that, could she have sued, the courts would have allowed her claim. She was too poor to afford litigation and she feared a suit, because Mr. Milton was

a harsh and choleric man and married to Mrs. Powell's daughter, who would be undone if any course were taken against him by Mrs. Powell, he having turned away his wife heretofore for a long absence upon some other occasion.

Milton showed himself moderate and reasonable in his reply:

Although I have compounded for my extent and shall be so much the longer in receiving my debt, yet at the request of Mrs. Powell, in respect to her present necessities, I am contented as far as belongs to my consent to allow her the thirds of what I receive from that estate, if the Commissioners shall so order it that what I allow her may not be reckoned on my account.

Even had Milton canceled the debt due him, Mrs. Powell would probably have gained nothing of her portion, for other debts, as the Commissioners noted, exceeded the value of the revenue. The fact that Milton acted justly did not prevent him from appearing in an ill light in the matter. Richard Powell had failed to complete his composition as a delinquent. His widow had represented the Wheatley property as worth only one-half of what Milton had computed it. She had received payments from him which, legally, he was not bound to have made. Her agent had misrepresented him in a statement regarding the very personal and painful matter of his quondam separation from his wife. But Milton, though skillful in the defense of the Commonwealth, had too much pride to enable him to contend successfully against the representations of his mother-in-law. She was a widow, black-gowned, elderly and in obvious poverty.

She was much at Westminster, for there were many suits in its courts consequent on the debts that were her major legacy. She was not loath to talk of the evils her family had suffered at the hands of unjust officials after the capitulation of Oxford. She had a large family. In one of her petitions she represented her children as actually starving. And one of her sons, a gallant young officer, had been slain in battle, defending the Commonwealth. This, she told of, too.

Milton shrank from sympathy.⁵ He demanded respect and admiration. Mrs. Powell courted sympathy. There is no doubt that she received it. To his credit be it said, neither this affair nor the bickering as to his Whitehall residence seemed appropriate as subjects for his pen. But that they affected him, and with blindness and ill health made sad the winter of 1651, one cannot doubt.

The negotiations with Portugal came to naught and Milton assisted in the matter of the envoy's passport on his departure. The commercial treaty contracted with Spain did not prevent such ill treatment of English subjects as to cause the English government to threaten to disavow it. Against the provinces of the Netherlands, the Navigation Act of 1651 proved so drastic a retaliation for the Baltic alliance of this state with Denmark as to make war almost inevitable. These things, more than personal discomforts, held Milton's attention.

In September of 1651, the Civil War was ended by the decisive battle of Worcester. *Mercurius Politicus* reviewed the military successes in jubilant justification of the claim that God had been steadfast in favoring the Commonwealth. A remarkable series of sentences of parallel construction, attaining to a climax of high power, suggests the inspiring character of Milton's supervision, if it does not actually prove his authorship.

Week after week, he conferred, deleted and suggested, so that *Politicus* furnished forth arguments with which its readers could answer their opponents on every point: the necessity of recon-

ciling Protestant factions, the danger of attempting any conciliation with the Royalists, the ills that would ensue were "young Tarquin" to accede to the throne of his evil ancestors, the unreasonable pretensions of Scotland, the treachery of Jesuits and Presbyterians, the superiority of a government of successive representatives bodies over a government of "grandees,"—all this was argued for the people's understanding.

There were petitions against the heavy taxes. *Politicus* strove to show that these were necessary, since great armies had to be maintained so long as neighbors remained hostile and there was persistence of disaffection. After Worcester, there were those who wished for a new parliament. "The succession of representative assemblies," that *Mercurius Politicus* had praised as most desirable was slow of attainment. The newsbook asked for patience. "The frame and fundamentals" of the nation had been shaken and many things were out of order; ruptures there were that needed restoring, dislocations that waited for reducing, wounds that lacked time's healing. Only when the body had been brought into a good increase or healthful temper could the patient be permitted to live at his own liberty and pleasure. Until then, those old physicians who had been in constant attendance and best knew the state of the body must be continued in attendance.

One wonders whether Milton was, himself, convinced by the arguments of the newsbook that he licensed. There had been much blood and labor but liberty was yet unborn. Could lust for power engender her? Was war dependable as midwife? Or had evils of such grossness been committed as to have reduced the body politic to sterile impotence? A great eagerness, almost a divine eagerness, to find that state or hero that would deserve supremest praise, a hope that out of chaos there might spring the dancing star of freedom, kept Milton tolerant, proudly quiescent, through courageous hope.

When he could assist as translator or interpreter, this minor

service he strove to render. But gradually his attendance at the sessions of the Council slackened. He was forced to spend helpless days of suffering in his rooms at Whitehall. The little son who bore his name was fretfully unquiet. He was very sickly. The wife and her two daughters were not akin of soul. Confinement was distressing. Dispatches were brought to him and he continued to supervise and license *Mercurius Politicus*. He wrote no pamphlets. The great work of the year was written on the King's side, a reconditioning of the contract theory, a changed interpretation of the laws of nature that bent them to a staunch support of monarchy. This *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes condemned doctrines that Milton held most dear. It taught the danger that inheres in eloquence when eloquence is not the trumpeter of wisdom. In its last division, it depicted the kingdom of darkness. Milton was learning of that kingdom.

It was obvious that England continued a house divided. *Eikonoklastes* was answered by Joseph Jayne, who in *The Image Unbroken*⁶ claimed that rebels had introduced into England their own proud wills for laws; that Milton, in defending them, had not been deluded only, but had made "the names of religion and conscience and the fear of God baits to deceive and venom to reproach." Through two hundred and sixty-seven pages, Milton's arguments against the King were countered and himself was vilified. But Joseph Jayne, Milton did not consider worthy of an answer.

The controversy between Bishop Hall and Smectymnuus was briefly revived by the publication of *Smectymnomastix*,⁷ the work of Harmon l'Estrange, formerly a student with Milton at Cambridge. It showed learning and fairness. This the Latin Secretary also left unanswered. A newsletter to *Politicus* claimed that Dr. Bramhall, Bishop of Londonderry, had attempted a refutation of Milton's *Defence*.⁸ On reaching England, it was found to be so poor a thing that Milton delegated its answer to his sprightly nephew. John Phillips assumed the task with

eagerness, writing that he did so because of devotion to his country and to the liberty to which he saw her restored, and, also, because of the duty which bound him "by a thousand considerations," to the "venerable individual," who had been attacked. John Phillips was twenty-one and Milton half through the forties.

Before the reply had been submitted for the "venerable individual's" final polishing and correcting, there occurred for Milton "a sudden and unavoidable removal to another house." In December of 1651, the apartment at Whitehall was yielded to Parliament's Committee and the Latin Secretary, with his family and John Phillips, found residence in "a pretty garden-house in Petty France." It opened into St. James Park, so that Milton could enjoy, during the eight years he was to spend there, the freshness of green air. He had as neighbor, the Lord Scudamore, who had befriended him in Paris.

Reappointment to his secretaryship, on December 29, 1651, showed that he was not regarded by the Council as the superannuated gentleman that to John Phillips he appeared. It was true that blindness and ill health necessitated long absence from his masters' sessions but none could doubt the strength and beauty of the fire within his slender body. The Commonwealth was not destitute of the service of younger men from Oxford and from Cambridge. These did not jeopardize the place of Milton.

Men of action there were in plenty. Of these, Cromwell stood high over all the rest. He had been granted Hampton Court and £40,000. Reward for his sword at Worcester! It was the man of war, and not the scribe that, now that peace had come, was to decide the pattern of the Commonwealth.

CHAPTER XIII

WIDOWER OF PETTY FRANCE

IN his garden house in Petty France, the servant of the Commonwealth was often visited in the winter of 1652 by Lady Ranelagh. She brought to him news of the political conversations heard at her brother's home in Pall Mall, where she presided and expressed with vigor and incisiveness her own opinions. Perhaps as the great lady made her exit, she passed on the doorstep an Englishman of sober garb and sober mien, who came, also, to Milton to discuss the conduct of the government and to exchange with him instruction in foreign tongues. For the Dutch that Roger Williams read him, Milton read him many languages.

The exchange was pleasant. Williams had come to consider grammar rules a tyranny and must have been as unorthodox in his teaching as in his political and religious views. Milton, too, was impatient of the rituals of pedagogy. His voice, according to Aubrey, was "delicate and tuneable,"—the appropriate instrument of an "harmonical and ingenious soul." In the matter of religion, the language of the two men was the same. They had learned at Cambridge distaste for churchly ceremony, contempt for hireling priests and ardor for liberty. Williams had been sent to London on a mission by his disciples and was eager to assist in winning for England such freedom as was enjoyed in Rhode Island. His aspiration Milton shared.

Shortly before, a committee of Parliament had condemned and ordered burned a Racovian catechism which, as censor, Milton had licensed for Dugard's printing. During the course of the investigation, Milton was examined, but of the questions

and replies there is no record. There was instituted a Committee for the Propagation of the Gospel,—forerunner of the organization so able in the expansion of Britain's empire. The new masters of England refused to countenance the catechism's denial of the Trinity, of the divinity of Christ, and the doctrine of atonement for original sin. Believing themselves firmly entrenched, they were becoming orthodox. They wished to spread the Gospel according to the interpretation of the Independents.

Their condemnation of papacy, Milton subscribed to. Its growth made for political bigotry and imperiled civic liberty. Anglicanism, state supported, and Presbyterianism that had supplanted it, successively had shown their fangs. Milton wished divorce of church and state. He projected a translation of the Bible that would remove the royal taint staining the version authorized by King James. Perhaps his plan was linked to the larger design of a polyglot translation, which the curate of All Hallows, Bread Street, brought before the Parliament.

The Latin Secretary walked sometimes in St. James Park, companioned by his nephews, by Cyriack Skinner or that "boon droll," Needham. The blind man believed that, dimly, he could still see the shapes of trees. Their foliage, their separate branches, he could not see. He accepted them as he accepted many acts of government that, considered separately, seemed evil. He felt these merged, somehow, into a pattern that was largely noble.

In his capacity of Secretary,¹ he worked more constantly than ever he had done before, translating into smooth, suave Latin dispatches to the Queen of Sweden, the Emperor Ferdinand, the King of Denmark,—laboring for dignity and precision in the negotiations that went forward with the Dutch. For this work, amanuenses were supplied.

The interregnum made a breach in the succession of poet laureates. It fell to Milton to furnish Latin verse to companion the portrait of Cromwell sent to Christina. In stately compliment, he promised that the harsh lines of the warrior's face

would soften under the benign influence of the Queen of Northern Stars.

There was a greater service that he alone could render by the clear vision of his inward eye. But for this there was neither request nor welcome. Increase of taxes, made necessary by the struggle to subdue Scotland and Ireland and the threat of warfare with the Dutch; the reënactment of Bradshaw's Printing Act, the adoption of the doctrine of a *mare clausum*; Parliament's effort to buttress its authority through a Presbyterian establishment,—these things he pondered, but maintained his silence.² Riddles of state that puzzle genius are sometimes solved by time so that they may be glibly summed in later years by school boys.

The government was beset by criticism, overweighted by men of ability and ambition. Vagrant sufferings that penetrated to all parts of England, divided councils as to their remedy, converged to heighten the intensity of the halo of King Charles I. Philosophers exalted monarchy, supplying bases for its existence, striving to reconcile it with democracy. In the hearts of the majority, it was still Charles Stuart who reigned. A Kentish baron, Sir Robert Filmer, after advocating anonymously the patriarchal form of monarchy, published in 1652, *Certain Observations Concerning the Originall of Government*.³ This quarto of fifty pages criticized Hobbes, Milton and Hugo Grotius. Filmer marked for dissent Milton's willingness to exclude from politics the greater part of the population that the sounder element might have more weight. If this gently argumentative pamphlet was read by Milton, it failed to arouse his anger. It elicited no reply.

By the spring of 1652, he had been aided by the appointment of a secretary assistant. The translations were continued but he, himself, ceased to attend the meetings of the Councils. For a blind man, the half mile to Whitehall was long. He no longer had official connection with *Politicus*. And in the spring, there

ceased the remarkable series of political articles which, doubtless, he had influenced. Their author hoped that the readers of *Politicus* could now understand what commonweal principles were and so "become the more resolute to defend them against the common enemy."⁴

That nothing new appeared from Milton's pen at this time was due rather to the plenitude of his translations for the Council than to his blindness or domestic sorrows. In May of 1652, his wife died, after giving birth to her third daughter. Soon his son died also.

In the month that marked the death of the young Royalist who was his wife, Milton indited a sonnet to Lord General Cromwell. So many poets have lamented so many Marys that, perhaps, his course was wise. The sonnet to Oliver was not intended as a eulogy but as a sturdy exhortation. Milton strove against the influence of those who wished to bind his countrymen in the secular chains of a state-supported ministry and sundry articles of belief.⁵ He was right in reckoning that true power lay with Oliver and in sounding the warning that he believed his God had ordered.

And as for Mary Powell, perhaps her God was not the great Taskmaster that her husband worshiped. Perhaps he was a very gracious God, who did not chide her for leaving England's monitor with four young children of whom small Anne of six was eldest. Perhaps He did not visit the sins of the husband upon the wife,—though they may have engendered sins in her also. One would like to fancy that the Holy Mary and the other Mary, called the Magdalene, came out to welcome Milton's Mary, who must have been full weary. They had suffered much through men. They deserved for their abode a quiet heaven, free of clashing angels. The little Royalist's mode of separation was permanent. Death at twenty-six was a neat answer to Milton's fervent tractates on divorce.

The husband was strong, lofty, majestic. But to posterity, it

would seem that to this wife and her daughters he was not pitiful, not sympathetic, rarely gentle. We admire him, we are astounded by him, but as Mary Powell's husband, not enamored of him. It must be that he possessed qualities that he did not display to her. For when death came to the garden house in Petty France near Bird Cage Walk there was one friend, the Lady Ranelagh, whom Milton has recorded as having been as kith and kin to him.

The need for public service dulled his grief. Cromwell was unaffected by his sonnet. Again the Secretary strove for freedom by endowing glory with love's sonnet notes. He appealed to Sir Henry Vane, President of the Council. Vane, he felt, would know the quality of spiritual power and civil and what divided these. Vane, he would have made the knight-protector of religion.⁶

In England, the ill success of Milton's efforts went unremarked. It was the negotiations with the Dutch that held attention. Citizens at home and abroad, even those of the parliamentary faction, wished to know why the new republic of England should quarrel with the older Republicans of Holland. William Penn, sailing in the Downs on the "Triumph," wrote that "the best principled and most conscientious" of the commanders did much desire information as to the justness of the English cause. Their ignorance on this point left them troubled and dejected. The Dutch had printed and circulated in England convincing arguments, and strove to rally opposition against a fratricidal struggle that would weaken Protestant prestige and the principle of republicanism.⁷

Their plenipotentiary, Adrian Pauw, whether to gain time or in sincerity, was empowered to offer peace on milder terms than had been advanced by his predecessors. Milton received a copy of the Ambassador's instructions before his arrival, gave them to John Phillips for translation and had ready his own translation of the Council's answer before the public reception of the

emissary.⁸ The English presentation of a bill of claims for old damages done British seamen, the revival of enmity engendered by the massacre of Amboyna thirty years before, and the recent assassination of Dorislaus, made almost inevitable a declaration of war.

Milton's service was to draft into persuasive Latin his country's arguments. These, together with the correspondence, were appended to the Parliamentary Declaration to dignify and justify a trades war. Such grievances as the murder of Dorislaus and the insolence of Van Tromp in the Channel might have been adjusted had there been no clash of overseas ambitions and trade rivalry. Against the score of Holland, it must be recorded that to this rivalry was due the cordial entertainment granted to Charles Stuart and his followers. This hospitality to those who would restore the monarchy, and the fact that the ambassador, who now apologized for Van Tromp, had once pled for the life of Charles Stuart, conditioned, more than any other reason, Milton's approval of what he did as agent.

As a European and a scholar, it appears that he would have preferred that England war on Turkey. In June of 1652, a month before the declaration against the Dutch, Milton wrote to Leonard Philaras, a Greek admirer, that he had no dearer desire than to possess such eloquence as would rouse the English to use their armies and fleets for the deliverance of Greece. To Philaras, an expatriate, he commended the task of rekindling Greek genius for the recovery of liberty from the Turks and for the resurrection of Greek glory. Milton's letter is the sum of his endeavor. It was left to another Englishman of another century to render to Greece the service of poet, warrior and politician.

Interest in warfare with the Dutch made the government less assiduous in the civil struggle. So lax were the licensers in the discharge of their duty that the press reached the nadir of its coarseness. When objections were made, they were ineffective.

The newsbooks changed their names and went bawdily on their way. *Mercurius Democritus* became *The Laughing Mercury*⁹ and then *Mercurius Fumigosus*, but its editor, John Crouch, continued in identical fashion to furnish lewd news "Out of the World, in the Moon, the Antipodes...and other adjacent Countries" for the right understanding of the "mad-merry people of Great Bedlam." The Royalists derided the newsbooks of their opponents as a swarm of "summer grubs, gadflies and paper plaguers."¹⁰ *Mercurius Mastix*, in its issue of July 20-27, 1652, berated the Parliamentarians as a "company of impudent snakes," who, with one exception, were not capable of writing three lines of sense. This year, the abolition of Christmas and strict prohibition against its observance furnished material for scores of pasquinades and pamphlets. Marchmont Needham and his fellows of the parliamentary faction, curbed, as they were, by the restraint success imposes, answered in large chorus, but less shrilly.

The most strident and penetrating of the attacks of 1652 came from abroad. *Regii Sanguinis Clamor ad Coelum*, or *The Cry of the King's Blood to Heaven* was the work of a resident of England, but because of its venomous character was published at the Hague. There it was acclaimed by England's enemies, the Dutch, and by the Cavaliers, who welcomed it as a counterblast to Milton's attack on Salmasius. Its author asserted that the European paragon of learning had in preparation a reply that would choke the throats of the English and scourge Milton to his knees. Meantime, a preliminary castigation was administered. Milton's blindness was derided as punishment inflicted by God for a notoriously evil life. He was declared to have been expelled from Cambridge for profligacy, to have been forced to flee to Italy and on his return to have become the hunger-starved hireling of blackguards. He had urged divorce for the increase of lascivity. Through vile attack and specious reasoning, he had inspired the wish for regicide and, execution wrought, he had

defended it. A little John o' my Thumb, he had brought low the Lord's anointed and was doomed by divine vengeance to a life most wretched and contemptible. Milton thus vilified in Latin prose and in a conclusion of hammer-like iambics, the author tuned his lyre to the lush praise of Salmasius.

Who was the writer whose excellent Latinity and hateful views, alike, perturbed John Milton? The prose pamphlet, the ode to Milton's rival and the iambic scurrilities against the poet were prefaced by an introduction by Alexander More or "Morus" a man of Scottish parentage, the principal of a Protestant school in Holland. Milton believed that More, who had written the preface, supervised publication and assisted circulation, was, also, author. The Council instructed their Latin Secretary to make ready a reply. He delayed, for he preferred to answer Salmasius's self. Again John Milton proved that, though he received the Council's pay, he was not strictly at their command. Lacking fresh material, the government had *Eikono-klastes* translated into French and transported, customs free, to Continental ports. Milton's drafting of public documents went on.¹¹

With the new year, a fresh attempt was made to restrain the criticism of the Royalists. The restrictions embodied in the Printing Acts were increased and made permanent. Gilbert Mabbott was reappointed censor. A score of printers in two months were sent their way to Newgate.¹² In this, Milton took no part. Nor did he longer exercise control over *Politicus*. It was a period in which he used his powers strictly as Latin Secretary.

His letter to President Bradshaw of the Council, dated February 21, 1653, commends the poet Andrew Marvell, as being best fitted to assist him, should the government consider assistance necessary. He declared himself well able to discharge all of his duties, save that of attending at the conferences with ambassadors. One feels behind the unreserved praise of Marvell and the reserve of the appeal for aid, an urgent need for help against an

irritating series of amanuenses; one senses loneliness, and a magnificent endeavor that groped its way to reach the goal where blindness would resolve itself to lucent strength.

The daughter of Sir Edward Coke wrote Roger Williams, now in far Rhode Island, that, instead of commending Milton, he should abhor the man and take notice of the judgment of God, "who strook him with blindness." Such mundane intervention of Deity, Milton believed in, but he felt himself secure in the divine approval, confident of his power.

There was need of his service. Cromwell meditated a fresh assault upon the government, for the good of England and the greater glory of himself. In the struggle for control, the Rump had determined not to dissolve itself but to add new members that would make it more nationally representative. The Lord General Cromwell determined otherwise. The twentieth of April, 1653, with his soldiers behind him, he invaded Parliament. He removed from its accustomed place the Speaker's mace. In his strong hands, it appeared the merest bauble. He emptied the hall and locked the doors that there might be no further sessions.

That afternoon, in like fashion, he dispersed the Council of State. There were protests, for its members had fancied themselves possessed of power. On this afternoon, it was Bradshaw, not Cromwell, who best reckoned on the future.

Sir [said the President of the Council], we have heard what you did at the House this morning and before many hours all England will hear of it, but, sir, you are mistaken to think that the Parliament is dissolved, for no power under heaven can dissolve them but themselves; therefore take you notice of that.

What reports came to Milton of these proceedings we do not know. We do know that he continued in his duties under Cromwell and the military council of thirteen. On behalf of this body, he translated for other governments assurances that the present

rulers had been the recipients of unexampled signs of the divine favor. And, perhaps for his own reassurance, he translated privately those holy psalms that celebrated the Lord's power to bring confusion to the foe and unfailing assistance to the chosen. With such translations, he whetted to keen edge his purpose of answering the promised pamphlet of Salmasius.

In the late summer of 1653, news reached England of Salmasius's death. And this Milton accepted as one proof more of the favor of the God of Battles. However, he would have preferred that divine vengeance had manifested itself in more dilatory fashion. His own score was not settled with the man who had called him blear-eyed and a blindling, an unclean beast with nothing more human about him than his guttery eyelids. It was reported that, according to directions, the attack Salmasius was engaged in writing at his death had been destroyed.

All that was left to Milton was to answer the diatribes of *Regii Sanguinis Clamor*. For this, he had an eager inclination and abundant time. His work had been lightened by the appointment of Philip Meadows for the translation of the Latin documents and for attendance at the meetings of the newly constituted Council. The Parliament, chosen according to Cromwell's prescription and dubbed derisively the Barebones Parliament, proved irksome to the great General. He was eager for both substance and shadow of dictatorial power.

Lambert, his son-in-law, and other of his generals assisted the designs of Cromwell by drawing up the Instrument of Government, England's first—and last—written constitution. It named Oliver, Lord Protector, giving him such powers as made the other organs of the government clearly subsidiary. The thirty-fifth clause of the Instrument was of especial interest to England's champion of religious freedom. It provided "that the Christian religion, as contained in the Scriptures, be held forth and recommended as the public profession of these nations—England, Ireland and Scotland."

And who were to be the interpreters of these Scriptures that determined the religion? Cromwell's own Independents. Through the use of ejectors, England was to be purged of those ministers or schoolmasters who practiced popery or prelacy and those judged guilty of using religion to cloak evil practices. In effect, it came about that those who avowed loyalty were permitted, in private, such worship as they pleased. For those who conducted public worship according to the principles of the Independents, there was the bonus of state tithes. In the following September, an Assembly of Divines of Parliament's choosing was summoned to give advice on ecclesiastical matters. Independency was to become orthodox. This was not the large liberty for which Milton had striven.

There appeared other indications that freedom was as far absent from an England ruled by Oliver Protector as from an England ruled by King Charles. Sir Henry Vane, but lately lauded in Milton's sonnet, was one of those who, having assisted in the downfall of one government, was now imprisoned by its successor. Overton and Bradshaw, likewise, were confined. To silence criticism, a committee was appointed, in August of 1653, to examine into the printing of scurrilous ballads and pamphlets and to advise what laws should be enacted for their suppression.

The champion of liberty felt a new need for answering *Clamor*. The King's blood had been shed, but the practices of the King were not uniquely royal. Praise of the new government must be seasoned with warnings. And so highly did John Milton esteem John Milton that it seemed to him Cromwell could be as effectively advised as the dead Salmasius punished. From December 1, 1653, to June, 1654, Milton was engaged in this dual pursuit.

During his progress, he was disturbed by news that his pamphlets on divorce were being translated into Dutch, the language of England's foremost enemies. He feared alterations and addi-

tions. He would have preferred a Latin translation, for his arguments were not for vulgar minds.

Some subtlety it takes, indeed, to understand the doctrines and the conduct of this Secretary for Foreign Tongues. Confidence in England's destiny, an unshakable belief in a divinely appointed and divinely dictated mission, a faith that God still walked the earth for the aid and comfort of the righteous, that His ways were devious,—sometimes to the point of appearing iniquitous, these made it possible for the blind champion to keep, unstained, idealism and yet honorably retain employment under despotism.¹⁸

Providence, if it did not exist, would have to be humanly created. It is a very necessary scapegoat for the blame due mortal wishes and mistakes. Once pronounce it inscrutable and it can be acclaimed the dictator of a *volte face* in human policy. It is Providence that with magnificent aplomb sanctions all work repugnant to the current code of morals or hateful to that innate, silent guide that is the residuum of centuries of experience. In the case of Milton, the perilous trafficking with Providence was never fatal. There remained enough of virtue always for clarion notes. As fruit of his months of travail and meditation, he was able to publish a very worthy second defense of the Commonwealth, a magnificent appeal that it should keep itself worthy of defense.

CHAPTER XIV

DEFENDER OF DEFENDERS

PEACE was made with the Dutch in late April of 1654. It may be presumed that the Government was no longer interested in whether Milton completed his reply to the *Regii Sanguinis Clamor*. The instructions to indite an answer had come from a previous Council and subsequent events had robbed Milton's work of any value it might have had in stimulating martial ardor. With the three kingdoms subdued and the United Provinces defeated, Cromwell was at the height of his power. A victor, he wished rather the increase of friendly relations than any emphasizing of political divergence. But whether because of esteem of Milton or neglect due to concern over a plot on Cromwell's life, there was no countermanding of instructions.

Milton's *Defensio Secunda* was committed to the press. Rumors that the reply was powerful and was ruthless spread to Holland. More, since he was innocent of the authorship of *Clamor* and guilty of certain private sins which made him fearful, entreated the Dutch ambassador to stay John Milton's hand. It is probable that, when approached, Milton had already deleted certain passages injurious to Holland. The information and request that reached him in regard to More, he failed to act upon. He remained unconvinced that More was guiltless. Even had he written no part of the book, he was responsible for its publishing and circulation.¹ His name in Latin form provided an excellent pun in connection with an unsavory adventure. His philanderings, which had occasioned condemnation by the presbytery, furnished the ingredients for a piquant sauce that Mil-

ton needed as a relish. It was a sauce to tickle the most jaded palate of his contemporaries. Milton wished readers for the *Defensio*, for it was worthy reading. *Clamor's* true author, Peter du Moulin, survived unscathed to boast his work after the Restoration.

Let it be at once admitted that only such prodigies as read both Latin and the Tabloids would today appreciate the Latin scurrilities against Morus. Distaste comes, not because Morus deserves sympathy, but because Milton has besmirched himself. A writer of the eighteenth century records that, if Milton scourged his opponent as a "letcher and a libertine," it was true that More's character "was not untainted in regard to women." He was unpopular: "his morals raised him some enemies; his merits perhaps more; and his temper, which was ambitious, fickle, bold and presumptuous, most of all." ² The salty letters Mme. de Saumaise published for his discomfiture, the efforts of the Dutch and French ambassadors on his behalf, provided such alarums and excursions as more than matched *Clamor*.

As answer for the claim that God had visited Milton with blindness, there is derision for the death of Salmasius,—a boast that it was caused by splenetic chagrin at Milton's triumph. Again Christina is praised for discernment in approving Milton's arguments above those of her quondam guest. She is assured that it is tyranny, not monarchy, that deserves destruction.

Point by point, Milton answers the aspersions against his life and character. The theme evokes eloquence, for it is not to More, but to posterity that Milton speaks. The loving nurture of his parents, early devotion to his studies, his honorable career at Cambridge and the gracious usage he had received in Italy, all these weave harmonies that rise to a diapason of self-laudation so eloquent that Milton, in his lonely darkness, is greatly heartened for yet greater work. Defender of the Commonwealth, his own praise, jewel-fraught, defends him from the shame and fear that comes from censure or the greater enemy, indifference.

It was necessary that Milton should stand erect. He visioned himself as born in a great age. The mighty deeds that he had witnessed, he had been designated to dignify by God, Himself. Others had won glory on the field of battle. War had made many great whom peace made small. England's need of Milton would endure. His pen could not be wielded by rough soldiers nor by petty clerks of peace. His work had been acclaimed by the nation whose executives named him their chief defender. And fame abroad approved the choice of England.

He had not circumscribed defense of liberty into a narrow circle. Cities, kingdoms and peoples had heard his speech. From the Pillars of Hercules to the extreme limits of the Indian Bacchus, he would restore expelled and exiled liberty. His eloquence had served, not only for the defense and glory of his country, but for the defense of the race against all enemies of human liberty.

And in his mission, he had been divinely aided. God and truth merged to identity, and he who propagated truth with zeal, himself took on a godly character. To the psychologist, this exaltation may suggest a certain type of madness. To Milton, such afflatus was of highest value in stretching himself to the stature necessary for his work.

From Olympus, one may accord not only praise but censure. The *Defense* contains a plenitude of eulogy,—eulogy of the great Protector and of the men of his Council, of leaders no longer in Oliver's good graces. Milton was bold in praising much that had occasioned opprobrium: Pride's Purge, the execution of the King, the ruthless conquest of Ireland, the restrictions on the suffrage and the establishment of a Protectorate. The *Defensio* must have made proud reading for chieftains of the Commonwealth. Its writer robed his thoughts in gorgeous raiment, studded them so thickly with poetic imagery that the Latin sentences, perforce, made progress slowly. And, sometimes, thought was heavy.

The learned praise was the praise of a friend whose inward eye

was troubled at the prospect for the future. Milton's recounting of the past would show posterity how nobly laid had been the foundations for good government. He had fear that there might be no further deeds for eulogizing. Those principles embedded in the structure deserved respect. Civic privileges should be reserved still for the worthy. He was no democrat and had scant faith in Parliament:

Those who excel in prudence, in experience, in industry and courage, however few they may be, will in my opinion finally constitute the majority and everywhere have the ascendant.

The less should yield to those who were greater, not in number, but in wisdom and in virtue. Cromwell must freely share his power with leaders. The father of his country, its protector, he must not hunger for a royal title and monopoly of power. Always, he should associate in his endeavors a sagacious council of advisers. The convulsions and storms of faction had made necessary the assumption of high power. Milton warned against abuse of it. There was already a surplus of legislation. Laws, he believed, were generally worse in proportion to their number. Restraints too closely fettered the people for their development of discipline. To this end, he wished the severance of church from state. This would free for other uses the largesse allotted to rapacious clergy. Instruction for the scotching of heresy would never come from hirelings. Religion, like morality, should be an achievement, not an imposition. There should be freedom of conscience and freedom of the press.

To be free was to be "pious, just, temperate, self-providing, abstinent from the property of others, and, in fine, magnanimous and brave." For liberty was the farmer and increaser of virtue. The function of the state was to foster such freedom. Oliver's assumption of high power involved the assumption of great responsibility. And only could the Protector attain to freedom, if he could make free his people also. Should he become a tyrant,

no one of all the English would be so much a slave. Through the self-discipline of Cromwell and his Ironsides, good had been accomplished. It remained to expand this regenerative power to the nation. In times of peace, the soldiers should assist.

The *Defensio*³ shows Milton as little democratic in his attitude toward education as toward government. The docile and indocile, diligent and learned, he argued, should not be tossed together for education at the public expense. Rewards of learning should be reserved for those who had already shown themselves learned.

In retrospect, Milton conceived of himself as deserving honor of his country at all stages of his life. In childhood, he had dulled his eyes with midnight work; at Cambridge, he had acquired that learning, which now the Commonwealth made constant use of. While yet a youth, he had begun his struggle for the liberties of England. This he had continued through his manhood, spending himself even to the loss of eyesight.

The blackness, veined with ashy gray, through which he had discerned large shapes had now become a total darkness. His state supplied a test to that virtue he strove to instill in others. He found it not miserable to be blind, though there would be misery in not being able to bear blindness. The colors and designs of things had disappeared, but their true qualities, he thought, he saw more clearly. Much that had vanished, he declared good riddance. He could recall blind heroes of the mighty past. He felt their kinship.

It seemed to him that through the shade of heavenly wings, God had brought darkness to him that an inner light, superior to sun-ray, should grow more luminous. If feebleness of flesh served to invigorate the spirit, as through obscurity divinity displayed itself, he prayed for weakness. Oliver Protector and all the nation that had struggled for sweet liberty must be defended from abuse of freedom, must be guided to the shining way of truth. So many times Milton had petitioned strength from the Almighty! His present task was greater than the destruction of

a monarchy. For its achievement, he prayed in deep humility that he might be perfected by feebleness, irradiated by obscurity!

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Copies of the *Defensio* were sent to all those named within it. Andrew Marvell⁴ carried one to Bradshaw. The young man's letter to Milton shows how eagerly the blind Secretary had inquired for news of its reception. He had tried to lesson Oliver, his generals and the Council's leaders to great things,—those designed to render life more happy, to increase the innocent enjoyments and comforts of existence, to pave the way to a state of future bliss more permanent and more pure.

The great men of the day received the book courteously and laid it aside to attend to matters of more urgency. When time came for its reading some found its criticisms and exhortations astounding. Men were accustomed to Milton's clever wit, his agility in making stinging puns and his versatile vocabulary of opprobrious epithets. Certain of the more critical complained now of an immoderate disregard of logic and evidence, inordinate self-esteem and a dubious willingness to bolster up bad argument with obscene personalities.

Milton had truly ventured into "the sun and dust and field of battle" and had taken with him heavy weapons. This was no affair of fencing foils. The Ambassador of the United Provinces and the Ambassador of France were both perturbed by Milton's methods and showed their friendliness for his antagonist. But the attack on More was of slight interest compared to the criticism, expressed and implied, of the condition of the Commonwealth.

Milton's presumption in advising Cromwell and other signs of the Secretary's conceit were what More emphasized in answer. *Fides Publica contra Calumnias*⁵ made much of these, since the peace precluded any attack upon the English government. The controversy threatened to be lengthy and some of Milton's friends advised that he should turn from it to nobler things. To Henry Oldenburgh, Aulic Counselor to the Senate of Bremen, Milton

replied that he knew of nothing nobler nor more useful than the vindication of liberty. But when there were no longer such attacks as those of More's, he promised that, if health permitted, he would resume the pleasant work he had abandoned.

He had translated blindness to a shade of heavenly wings and in their shelter he thought of Heaven and the Commonwealth; ⁶ of the Ironsides and contending angels; of outward blackness and celestial, plangent light. He studied and wrote upon the history of England,—compact of glory, stained with venal sins. From the struggle in which he vindicated human liberty, he turned to ponder on the ways of God to man. And of a chaos of imaginings, of memories of drama that he had worked upon when fresh from Italy, of heavy thoughts on present happenings, slowly there formed the outline of an epic, no king its subject,—Arthur had fallen with the head of Charles I—blind Milton dared to shape as hero the very God, himself.

CHAPTER XV

"ONE MR. MILTON, A BLIND MAN"

ON April 17, 1655, Milton's salary of £288 a year was signally reduced.¹ During the preceding months, he had translated few despatches. In the last half year, he had produced no writing for the Commonwealth. The *Fides Publica* of Morus remained unanswered. The Secretary for Foreign Tongues was not paid that he might conceive an epic. His second *Defensio* had been unpleasantly zealous in criticism of the Government and had given offense to two ambassadors because of charges against Morus.

However, the splendor of his former services was such that it was ordered he should be paid £150 a year for life,—such sum to be taken from "his Highness Exchequer." Philip Meadows was appointed Secretary of the Latin Tongue with annual salary of £200. The services of John Hall and Marchmont Needham were, for a time, dispensed with. Oliver Protector had attained such state that he saw no danger in weakening some of the props that had upheld him.

Milton seems to have accepted the reduction with good grace. His answer to More, however, when it did appear, came as a *Defensio pro Se*, for it was written on his own initiative and in his own behalf. It thoroughly justified the warning of the French Ambassador that if More joined issue with the author of the *Defensio*, there would be worse to follow. Milton regarded his antagonist a thing so vile as to be held a public enemy, which the Provinces should expel from Amsterdam. In spite of vehemence, the pamphlet shows that interest in defending himself, *per se*, was not of such amplitude as to afford Milton with

inspiration. Peace made it impossible for More to attack him in his character of champion of the Commonwealth and vitiated the force of Milton's answer. The Latin Secretary permitted a supplement to the *Fides Publica* to go unanswered.

The great event of the year 1655 was the massacre of the Vaudois. Protestants before the time of Luther, they were ordered by the Piedmontese to adopt Catholicism, with the alternative of death and confiscation of their property. They chose to remain Protestants and to continue in their Alpine homes. The result was massacre.² Some escaped the soldiery by fleeing from their villages to the mountains. Death met them there. Their mourners were the Protestants of Europe, with those of England chief. To the evangelical Swiss Cantons, to Charles of Sweden, to the King of Denmark and even to his Catholic majesty, Louis XIV of France, was made appeal on behalf of the survivors. Cromwell, not famed for pity, declared that the event came as close his heart as if his own nearest and dearest had been concerned. The horror of the calamity stood blackly out from the background Milton had acquired in youth from reading the simple, pure account that Pastor Peter Gilles had written of the Piedmont Protestants. The massacre won from Milton an angry pity, —alms more powerful than the English gold borne to the Vaudois by an emissary. The fervor and dignity of the despatches sent to foreign powers, the dignity and rigor of the proclamation of a day of fasting show Oliver Protector and his Secretary to have merged their wills and energies to perfect instruments.³

But the sonnet, *On the Late Massacre in Piedmont*, is Milton's own demand of God's vengeance for his slaughtered host, comparable in its mandatory directness to Cromwell's letter to the Duke of Alva, wherein was omitted the ceremonious "Royal Highness." The Spanish grandee considered himself insulted, but replied. Those who read Milton's sonnet could not but feel convinced that there would be an answer to his blunt petition. The sonnet has been called a collect in verse. If so, it was one de-

signed to be said on going into battle. Psalms and the Ironsides had, before this, made a powerful combination. And now the squadron of Admiral Blake rode at anchor in the Mediterranean.

The Duke of Savoy determined on peace. He withdrew his army and restored the surviving Vaudois to their homes. Cromwell was gratified that Louis XIV, also, rebuked the Duke of Savoy. French officers who had ordered their men to assist the Piedmont soldiery received the royal censure. To Turin, Cromwell sent a special envoy. Security was pledged the Vaudois in the Peace of Pignerole.

England's anger was deflected, perforce, from the Piedmont government. It fell upon the Spaniards. To older grievances, the Commonwealth added the charge that the massacre had been schemed and appointed in the Councils of the Spanish court at the instigation of Jesuits. The Latin draft of the twenty-page indictment was probably the work of Milton. By the statesman-like logic of Cromwell, the massacre of the Vaudois was made to justify lucrative attacks on Spanish shipping and the Indies. From subsequent despatches to the Protestant nations of Europe and to France, it would appear that the Protector's memory of the massacre was long and bitter,—a righteous indignation held in reserve to sanctify contracting of alliances and even appeals to force. There is no record that ever he suffered a twinge of remorse for the massacre of the Irish at Drogheda. *That*, he pronounced the judgment of God upon barbarians and fondly he believed that it would prevent effusion of blood for the future.

He projected a great alliance of European nations with Protestantism as its base. But the facts of history showed that the theory of religion as prime motivating force was false. Although the massacre of the Vaudois served his purpose in exhibiting the cruelty of the Catholics, the Protestant Swiss lacked ardor in condemnation of the Italians and in support of victims. The young king of Sweden was faced with the enmity of Protestant Denmark, Brandenburg and the United Provinces; Protestant Bran-

denburg was willing to desert her allies to sign a treaty with Catholic Poland. The bait was sovereignty of East Prussia. Obviously, the Peace of Münster had not solved questions of religion. The nation for which Cromwell coveted leadership in his great project found the friendship of Catholic France an asset. It was perturbed because the peace concluded with the Protestant Netherlands left, still, division between the two contracting nations.

Through the drafting of many dispatches, Milton must have been made cognizant of the dubious background of mysteries of state. And yet the foreign policy of the Protectorate was more gratifying to him than its domestic record. He was not eager to scrutinize events at home after the writing of the second *Defensio*. They showed so clearly that his warnings had been ineffective. Orders of his Highness, made and published by and with the consent of his Council, deprived the English of all newsbooks, except those edited by Needham and Thurloe.⁴ The favored *Mercurius Politicus* and the *Publick Intelligencer* related the exploits of the government when and in the way the government desired. There was enforced cessation of allegedly scandalous books and pamphlets. Clogging restrictions through petty legislation were multiplied. Triers and ejectors regulated to a nicety the surface morals of the members of an Established Church.

Milton turned to the past,⁵ worked on his early history of Britain, gathered material for a Latin Thesaurus and sometimes mused on Paradise, which was far distant from sober England. Two sonnets addressed to Cyriack Skinner show him to have been in process of developing a philosophic calm which, had it been perfected, would have seriously diminished the vigor of his writing. For the time being, he had become convinced that Heaven intended him to find enjoyment. It was, perhaps, at this time that he began his courtship of Katherine Woodcocke.

The reputation of his writings abroad gave partial compensation for their scant effect at home. Aubrey says that he was

"mightily importuned to go into France and Italy." He was visited by many travelers, who wished to report that they had seen Oliver Protector and John Milton. The curious sought Bread Street, for "they would see the house and chamber where he was born." But the buzzing admiration of such gadflies could not still an inner voice that cried for fame and service. His very pride engendered true humility. Through obscurity, he could distinguish false from true. The mood of the sonnets to Cyriack yielded most splendidly to a quiescence that promised future strivings. The magnitude of his conceptions made him newly careless in the reckoning of work acclaimed.

In the sonnet on his blindness, there is implicit not only that fortitude that would make possible work under stupendous difficulties, but a vision of man's small place in the great scheme of things,—a vision that would engender patience in the individual until the allotted time had come for his faint contribution:

When I consider how my light is spent,
 E're half my days, in this dark world and wide,
 And that one Talent which is death to hide,
 Lodg'd with me useless, though my Soul more bent
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, least he, returning, chide,
 Doth God exact day-labour, light deny'd?
 I fondly ask. But Patience to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need
 Either man's work or his own gifts, Who best
 Bear his milde yোক, they serve him best,
 his state
 Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed,
 And post o're Land and Ocean without rest:
 They also serve who only stand and waite.

This sonnet is the sepulcher of the Milton who could rage for personal reasons against a rival scholar. What perished merits no lamenting. The Milton that survived bore with equanimity at-

tacks on his religion and distortions of his teachings. He lost an idol, for Christina, after her abdication, had journeyed to Rome, received the papal blessing and become a Catholic. He made no bitter comment. News came in the *Intelligencer* that his rival, Morus, had gone into France and been given charge of the church at Charenton; that his sermons had won praise at Rouen.⁶ Milton contented himself with regretting to Henry Oldenburgh that the French church had chosen so profligate a guide. The Secretary drafted letters of safe conduct, praising with ceremonious exaggeration the dull merits of less worthy men.

His quondam subordinate, Meadows, was sent by the government to Portugal and, returning, was given generous recompense and dispatched to Denmark with £1000 a year in addition to the expenses of his journey. Milton's salary, through grace of disregarding the Order that reduced it to £150, amounted to the fifth of Meadows'. He was set the task of drafting in Latin a letter to the Consuls and Senate of Hamburg, requesting good offices for the fortunate envoy when he should pass through their city.

The nephew, John Phillips, published in 1656, a sprightly book called *Sportive Wit or The Muses' Merriment*. It was an invocation to the Commonwealth's most dreaded enemy,—to laughter. The Council seriously examined the trivia, pronounced it lascivious and profane and ordered that it be seized and burned. There is no sign that Milton either added his condemnation or strove to avert the punishment.

In London, since July of 1655, there had been resident Count Christian Bundt with a retinue of some two hundred followers. His mission was the negotiation of a treaty of alliance between Sweden and the Commonwealth. Cromwell entertained him sumptuously and encouraged him to expect favorable decision. The contracting of a strait, dual alliance, however, would endanger the success of the larger project of a league of Protestants, for Sweden's King was hated and envied. England delayed.

Both Bundt and Charles X were men unused to temporizing. By May of 1656, the plenipotentiary had reached a pitch of indignation that was acute. He had been tendered a document in English, though Latin was the language of all treaties. He demanded, therefore, suitable Latin translation. For days, he fumed in impatience and then protested when he found that the treaty had been sent to be translated by "one Mr. Milton, a blind man."

The rumor of the Secretary's fame, it would seem, had not reached this irate nobleman. He complained that this Mr. Milton would have to employ an amanuensis, thus endangering the secrecy of the negotiations. He protested that he should not be kept waiting. It was strange that in all England there was only this blind man capable of turning English into Latin. White-locke, one of the Commissioners, records that employment of Mr. Milton was excused to Count Bundt on the score that other servants of the Council, fit for that employment, were then absent.⁷

Milton completed the work. One hopes he did not know of the apologetic tone the Council had used in explanation. The arrogant Ambassador was greatly liked by Cromwell. In July, Milton was called upon to translate a letter of honorable dismissal, full of high praise for Count Bundt's work in negotiating the treaty. What privately John Milton thought, there is no knowing. Perhaps he found the belligerency of the peace-maker merely ludicrous.

Some weeks thereafter, he wrote to Lady Ranelagh's son, a student then at Oxford:

Virtues of princes, which you extol with praises, and matters of that sort in which force is of most avail, I would not have you admire too much. . . . Learn you already from your early age, to weigh and discern great characters not by force and animal strength, but by justice and temperance.

For a brief period, the biography of Milton appears more clearly written in a Bible⁸ and parish register than in papers of

state. At St. Margaret's, Westminster, where once John Milton, the Divorcer, had been preached against, there were published on October 22, 1656, and two successive Sundays, the banns of Milton and Katherine Woodcocke, daughter to Captain Woodcocke of the parish of Aldermanbury. The marriage, itself, was a civil ceremony performed on November 12, 1656, by a former Lord Mayor, Sir John Dethicke. The register of St. Margaret's records a daughter, born October 19 of the year following. Under this was later added in an old hand, a statement as to paternity: "This is Milton, Oliver's Secretary." So was there registered the eclipse of the poet by the politician! A much used Bible in the British Museum records this birth. It records also the death of little Katherine on March 17, 1657, and of the mother on February 3, six weeks preceding. The parish register shows that the mother's body remained unburied for a week.

One can add little to the record. The woman, whom Milton had never seen, appears but dimly to us through the sonnet he has left his "late espoused saint." It is probable that she had a kinder husband than Mary Powell knew. By the silencing of the press, she was spared sight of the bitter attacks that were made on Milton even during his seclusion. One of Bishop Hacket's, written shortly before the young wife's death, remained unpublished until after the Restoration.⁹ This, with others, in manuscript made their way from hand to hand. They did not reach the house in Petty France.

Whether because of personal events or because Milton had determined for a period to forbear publishing, he permitted to go without rejoinder the ingenious criticism of the Commonwealth, dedicated to a reluctant Cromwell by Harrington in 1656. The insistence in *Oceana* on democratically representative government, the use of the ballot, rotation in office, and a more equitable distribution of land, provided abundant material for discussion. The ridicule apportioned Harrington by *Mercurius Politicus*¹⁰ and the discussions he provoked must surely have

brought the work to Milton's attention. But it would have been awkward to have managed an honest answer without adding his own to Harrington's criticisms.

To analyze and to evaluate, to prescribe, seemed not the function of one who waited. He sought refuge in history,—working to sift the true from false in the early chronicles of England; filing such papers as had passed through his hands from his secretaryship in 1649,—letters to Cromwell of exhortation, congratulatory addresses, petitions, the intercepted communication of Royalists—rich material which, perhaps, he could use later for history of the Commonwealth.¹¹ The function of the true historian,—not he who uses historical facts to point his oratory nor he who curves them to follow theories, engaged his eager interest. To Henry de Brass in July of 1657, he wrote of the high standard he had determined on:

He who would write of worthy deeds worthily must write with mental endowments and experience of affairs not less than were in the doers of the same, so as to be able with equal mind to comprehend and measure even the greatest of them, and when he has comprehended them, to relate them distinctly and gravely in pure and chosen speech. That he should do so in ornate style, I do not much care about; for I want an historian, not an orator. Nor yet would I have frequent maxims, or criticisms on the transactions prolixly thrown in, lest by interrupting the thread of events, the historian should invade the office of the political writer; for if the historian in explicating counsels and narrating facts, follows truth most of all and not his own fancy or conjecture, he fulfills his proper duty. I would add also that characteristic of Sallust . . . to be able to throw off a great deal in few words: a thing which I think no one can do without the sharpest judgment and a certain temperance at the same time.

Milton had in his keeping a manuscript written by that historian of the world, Sir Walter Raleigh. This *Cabinet Council*, which now he chose to edit, was a book of two hundred pages,

containing discourses on the public weal and sovereign states. It defined the several types of monarchy, discussed the duties of officials, the art of ruling, the causes and remedies for conspiracy, treason and civil war.

The "ever renowned knight," its author, had been sent to the block by a Stuart. It is possible that under his Highness, Oliver Protector, he might have gone to his death in the same manner. In the year of the book's publication, papists and delinquents were required by proclamation to leave London and Westminster. Royalist conspirators were arrested and summarily executed. Search was made everywhere for the author of an ingenious book published under the provocative title of *Killing no Murther*. Its thesis was that it was not only lawful but honorable to slay the English tyrant. Oliver was exceedingly alarmed.¹²

The circle had been rounded and many arguments were used to incite the Royalists that Milton had used to incite the enemies of Charles. Oliver was feared. At home, his rule was despotic; abroad, it was known that he projected a league of Protestant nations for joint attack on Austria, Poland and Catholicism generally. He who is feared has need, himself, to be fearful. The cause of the Stuarts had gained in strength and luster by defeat. In the book that Milton edited, Raleigh had written:

Honor may sometimes be got as well by the loss as gaining of victory. Every man knoweth glory is due to the victor, and we deny not the same privilege to the vanquished, being able to make proof that the loss proceeded not from his default.

In the summer of 1658, the gain of Dunkirk gave evidence again of Cromwell's strength. Its possession engendered fresh fear of England in the Spanish and the Dutch. The city was the key to Spanish Flanders. Protection of this Continental holding would be costly. There was a fanfare of congratulation and exchange of embassies between the allies, France and England. Milton wrote no ode on the event. He pondered the revolt of angels and celestial victories, and still he waited.

In August of 1658, the peace which Meadows had assisted in negotiating between Sweden and Denmark was disrupted. Charles marched on Copenhagen. He sent dispatches to explain the circumstance to Cromwell. These were not read by him. There arrived an envoy from the Elector of Brandenburg. He was urgent for audience so that he might present his master's explanation of a fresh alliance with Catholic Poland. Andrew Marvell was delegated to receive him. Cromwell was no longer a factor in the project of a European League of Protestants. He was indifferent that his ally, Louis XIV, had been defeated in the imperial election by the King of Hungary.

Cromwell was more aloof than Milton from the affairs of Europe and the Seven Seas. The Protector was dying. On the anniversary of his victories at Dunbar and at Worcester, his life and reign were terminated. He had been a Republican who had developed into "his Highness." He had bestowed knighthoods, maintained a court, addressed Parliament from beneath a royal canopy, and legislated by edicts and proclamations. At death, he bequeathed his power to his son, "the most Serene Prince Richard."

He had subjugated Scotland and Ireland in such fashion as made them arsenals of hate for generations. He had renewed in England the dubious glory of naval and military conquest. He had projected an alliance of Protestant princes, not for peace but for the defeat of Catholics. He had broken the continuity of England's great unwritten constitution by preferring to it an Instrument of Government and his sovereign will. He had filched from the nation in great degree those liberties he had sworn to restore and to protect. He had held high office and not fulfilled the responsibilities of an iconoclast who undertakes the office by himself made vacant.

This one can say in requiem: his intent was honest, the inception of his labor glorious. Greater men than Cromwell have failed to penetrate the disguise ambition has assumed. Had he

possessed the good fortune to have died earlier, free men and poets and princes of liberal spirit might have mourned him deeply. As it was, longevity brought anti-climax.

There appears something ironic and strangely appropriate in the "list of persons appointed to have mourning approved by the Council."—Item: "Latin Secretaries, John Milton and Andrew Marvell, nine yards proposed, reduced to six."¹³

CHAPTER XVI

"GOOSE QUILL CHAMPION"

THE two Latin Secretaries, Milton and Marvell, briefly continued their services under Richard's Protectorate. Their dispatches evidence the effort of the son to preserve Cromwellian policy and they expose his indecision. The inception of the new administration seemed to Milton a time propitious for the reburnishing of certain bright desires, grown tarnished through the government's neglect in the late years. He published a fresh edition of his first *Defence*, written when the world of England had seemed newly created, holding in ambient promise the hope that reasoned liberty might gain an island home and spread its beams through all the world.

In spite of the highly laudatory postscript which Milton appended and the book's real worth, it attracted scant attention. The stream of events was flowing rapidly and the goals of Milton's endeavors were not chief in public interest. For posterity, the publication retains its interest because of a splendid promise, which had been vainglorious had it preceded any work less noble than an epic: Milton assures his country and men of all nations whatsoever that he purposes greater things than any yet accomplished,—this, if strength were given, and strength would be given, unless it were untrue that God was gracious. Thus came the veiled announcement of a great work well begun. Had it been clearly said that the middle-aged Latin Secretary projected the noblest epic of our language, the statement would have been received with incredulity.¹

Few remembered the masque of *Comus*; fewer still the briefer poems of Milton's youth. In the three years preceding Crom-

well's death, there had been published three anthologies. In none of these were bound the poems of Milton. Nor were they lacked. They were not in tempo with the times. Men babbled the poesies and devices of Edward Phillips's *Mysteries of Love and Eloquence*, but lately published. Surfeit of politics, the closed doors of the theaters, the banishing of sports and pleasant pastimes had bred an eager lust for rhyming jests, broad farce and amorous poetry. And this, the nephew furnished.

Milton could not pander to such need. He worked again upon the matter of religious liberty. When Parliament met in January of 1659, he had ready for its perusal the treatise, *Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*,² a further argument that it is not lawful for any power on earth to compel in matters of religion. His approach was direct but not propitious. He reminded the members that their power, being brief, they should concern themselves to regard other men's consciences, as they would have their own regarded when others inherited their power. The state was so unstable that any reference to change was ill advised. Milton appealed to those within the Parliament, who formerly had pled this cause without the Council. Again he bungled. The welding of Church and State had been sometime accepted. Milton's contention that force and hire are enemies of true religion went unregarded. The pamphlet lacked the tang of bitterness. Its scriptural arguments were of no benefit in deciding whether or not Richard's Protectorate should be continued and whether or not there should be reëstablished an Upper House. These were the issues of practical politics and these were worthy of debate. Should decisions be made by Richard and his Council, by the Army's delegates or by the non-representative parliament that Milton had addressed?

On the nineteenth of April, 1659, a trial of strength was made when Richard appeared in Wallingford House and ordered the dissolution of the Council of Officers, in accordance with the wish of Parliament. The regiments who favored the opposition

showed their loyalty. Those on whom Parliament and Richard had depended were quiescent. Parliament was, perforce, dissolved and Richard was held in power only until the Rump and the republic, as of 1649, could be restored.

Very happily, he abdicated on May 25 of 1659. His Serene Highness had enjoyed little serenity as England's governor. Light was being shed on the old riddle of whether the Army had made Cromwell or Cromwell had made the Army. It was not a tool for the founding of a dynasty. The restoration of the Rump and its appointment of a Council revived the hope in Milton that there would follow a restoration, also, of the principles of the Old Republicans,—principles that Cromwell had deserted. In May, the *Treatise of Civil Power* was on sale at the booksellers' shops in Paul's Church Yard, the Old Exchange and at Westminster. It was advertised in *The Publick Intelligencer*,³ but slight desire was shown for reading it.

It was the question of sovereignty that provoked debate and caused divisions. The Rump showed weakness. Time had taken toll of many of its leaders. Its former lease on power had developed such divergence of opinion as left no hope for unity. Experience of power had made it incapable of becoming simply power's instrument. It seemed probable that England might be favored with a succession of barrack emperors. General Lambert measured himself for high command. He suppressed uprisings and strove for peace.

England was weary of the contentions of the Brethren, weary, too, of the factious chieftains of the Army. She welcomed the squibs of Royalist pamphleteers. Chief of these writers was Roger L'Estrange, most daring and most persistent. In August of 1659, at a time when Lambert was occupied in the provinces and the Capital was almost free of troops, L'Estrange put forward a very simple and dangerous proposal.⁴ It was that England should freely elect a parliament with no hampering qualifications on the franchise, and that this parliament should settle on the form

of government. Such a procedure, it was shrewdly surmised, would result in Stuart restoration. Men to whom such an idea had been inconceivable, now considered its possibilities and weighed the claims of Charles against his rivals.

The month that L'Estrange began his arguments for a free Parliament, Milton addressed to the Rump a second plea for disestablishment, *Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings Out of the Church*. The body to whom he appealed had already decreed the maintenance of the Established Church and the payment of tithes for this purpose until discovery of a better means. Numerous petitions against these actions and memory of the early tenets of the Independents occasioned Milton to hope their policy might be reversed. What form or body government assumed was a matter of such indifference that he could use persuasive praise without a qualm of conscience. It was the spirit of the government which he sought to direct, and it seemed to him that till religion was set free from the monopoly of hirelings, no model whatsoever of a Commonwealth could prove successful or undisturbed. Force on the one side restraining and hire on the other corrupting were the enemies of true religion. Because of these, England still had her false opinions, her pluralities, non-residents, tithes and fees. And, tragically, it seemed that Independents now used popish arguments to gain dependence on the magistrates for maintenance.

From this institution, the Established Church, which contributed no spiritual strength to England, Milton would have taken wealth to dower academies and libraries. For some, he promised, these would make possible a competency of learning and an honest trade. In others, there would be developed the spiritual qualities of leadership. No priestly caste would result, but a universal priesthood of those who read and pondered God's revelations. There was no need for Parliament to discuss ways and means of supporting hirelings. These could be no better than those "blind mouths" whom Milton had inveighed

against in youth. There was greater work than this for the men whose "magnanimous counsels first opened and unbound the age from a double bondage under prelatical and royal tyranny." This parliament had heartened Englishmen to rise from the slavish dejection wherein from father to son they had been bred and taught. They had been, second only to God, authors and patrons of religious and civil liberty, and now, "after a brief but scandalous night of interruption," were once again entrusted with the care of England's peace and safety.

Yet another time, the Secretary was deluded by the hope that praise, the highest praise of all,—a summoning to high endeavor, could tutor England's governors to set her in the path of truth. His voice sounded very faintly in the wilderness of party strife and individual ambition. In September, General Lambert with arms, not praise, strove to dictate Parliament's nominations and decisions. When that body angrily cashiered him with his eight associates, it signed its own death warrant. Lambert scored a temporary victory by forcing dissolution.

Colonel Sydenham made an attempt before the Council of State to ascribe the enforced dissolution to the will of Providence. At this, President Bradshaw rose in his place. He had, in his time, himself been instrumental in putting into effect such decrees. He had presided at the trial of the late King. He had approved Pride's Purge. Now he declared abhorrence of this latest *coup d'état*. He was old and he was preparing to meet his God. He had no patience to sit and hear His name blasphemed. He rose and departed to his lodgings.

Bradshaw was one of Milton's heroes. The Secretary shared his anger and amazement that an army chieftain should dissolve that famous parliament, which, so shortly before, the army had reëstablished. The dissolution had resulted from

no apparent cause of concernment to the Church or Commonwealth, but only for the discommissioning of nine great officers.

The Explanation of the Frontis-Piece.

THE REVOLUTION of time,
Which measur'd Fate to Rebels' Crime;
Though it revert a happy State,
Did lawless Routs of Realms create,
Made Gospel and the Law submit,
Magna Charta, Holy writ,
The Mitre and the civil Gown
To wait upon the falling Crown;
At length with its own changes tyr'd,
Not hop'd for, and in vain desir'd,
Restor'd the ancient legal frame,
As only altered to the same;
Down go the conquering Rebels' Arms,
Subdu'd alone by peaceful charms.
The Bishops, Judges, both appear
From their black cloud most brightly clear.
The disappointed Soldiers are
Discharg'd at Heav'n's his vainer fire,
And in his room, the Gentry rise
Train'd up by th' Pious and the Wise;
The rising Scepter points its ray's,
To Heaven in sign of Halcyon day's.
Janus with double aspect shows
Our Joys have vanquish'd our Woes;
Upon the Globe his foot's plac'd,
To stay its motion, that so fix'd,
The State may stand, and to secure,
And make our happiness endure,
He hath shut up his Temple Gates:
Farewel ye angry marring Fates.



FRONTISPIECE OF THE REVOLUTION OF TIME

In this quaint frontispiece, designed to show the triumph of the Royalists, Janus frowns on Oliver's Man, who departs with some fanfare of pistol shots. The God welcomes the return of the Churchman, who lends a helping hand to the Judge, who assists the Noble. The foothold of the Cavalier appears to be precarious. Despite the assurance of the verses, one wonders whether Janus is standing in such sturdy fashion as to prevent another revolution of the orb of time. Reproduced by permission of the Widener Library, Harvard University

From a letter which Milton dispatched to a friend in the country, it appears that the writer had been told how Lambert and his eight conspired to gain control and so deserved their fate. He is unwilling to censure until he has better information. He is concerned with the fame of the Army at home and abroad,—fearful that it has ceased to be the disciplined instrument needful for England's well-being. His wish was that either the Rump be re-admitted to sit as General Council of State or that, since now the army had the power, the Council of State should be composed of well-affected officers. Milton's failure to designate a preference between these two alternatives is characteristic of his disregard for the form of government, so long as it escaped the dominance of monarch or dictator.

Due qualifications for membership in the Council of State, he was insistent on: determination to afford liberty of conscience to all professing scripture their rule of faith and worship. Between Council and Army, he would have prescribed a mutual league and oath for life-long maintenance. This engagement Milton felt the Army would accept, unless the soldiery were worked upon by some one who wished single power. And here he sensed the danger, rightly fearing chaos.

Among the last rites performed by the Council which the Rump had nominated was the clearing off of debts. On October 25, 1659, Milton's name was placed on a warrant for payment to be made to him out of the Council's contingencies at the rate of £200 per annum to the date of October 22. As his nephew, Edward Phillips, states it:

A little before the King's coming over, he was sequestered from his office of Latin Secretary and the salary thereunto belonging.

He had visioned for England two alternatives of government. England chose the third. Relics of the Council of State chosen by the Rump were conjoined with the Army's nominees into a Committee of Safety with Whitehall as its meeting place. At

Wallingford House, the Council of Officers continued its sessions, retaining as its members some of those who sat upon the new Committee. Lambert's *coup d'état* was denounced by General Monk in Scotland, who called for a restoration of the Rump. Ireland, too, wished this, and Lambert failed to hold the major part of the Army from supporting such decision. The result was three months' anarchy.

From the blackness, there were born a multitude of shooting stars of vagrant theories. There was scarcely an apprentice in London, a presbyter or county gentleman who had not his own peculiar idea of how government should be conducted. On the eighteenth of October, Bradshaw died in the crash of the microcosm he had daringly assisted to construct. The reins of government were held so loosely that the Royalist press, ambling again at pleasure, berated him on the occasion of his funeral as an "infernal saint":

What havoc did he make of Kings and princes

His justice was as blind as his friend Milton,
 Who slandered the King's Book with an ill tongue.⁵

With disaffection growing for any form of government not one's peculiar own, Lambert left for the north to make a proof of strength with Monk. In his absence, the Rump resumed its sessions, December, 1659, and shortly ordered the dispersal of his Army. The general found himself deserted. On December 6, L'Estrange again proposed that the people of England should elect without restriction a parliament to pass upon the form of government.⁶ This plan, the Rump ignored. It assessed Royalist London £100,000 per month for the government's expenses and on December 14, 1659, decreed that a parliament be convened after being chosen with the old restrictions with which Cromwell had hedged elections. Meantime, the Army Council busied itself with a constitution, which embodying the illiberal

theories of Whitelocke, was no more popular with Milton than with L'Estrange. The deputies of the twice dissolved Rump in parley with General Monk were assured their sessions would be faithfully supported. To former Presbyterian members, the accommodating General promised redress for the injustice done by Colonel Pride. To the City, he proposed an election free of restrictions. London should not have to pay assessments levied by the representatives of a minority. On petition from Parliament, he agreed to punish the malcontents within the City Council,—those who had instigated the opposition to the Rump's taxation. For this promise, he soon apologized to the Lord Mayor.

So catholic was the General's complaisance that speedily he found himself within the City's walls. In January, of 1660, flanked with loyal troops, he could follow his own inclination. This was the restoration of the parliament of 1640, so that by its authority writs could be issued for a free election. Meantime, he consulted with the Royalists on further measures looking toward a Restoration.

On February 1, 1660, Monk requested that the Rump complete its membership and dissolve itself on May 6, to be succeeded by an assembly freely elected. Parliament preferred to recruit to its body only such men as held opinions congenial to its wishes. It issued writs to effect this purpose. Furious indignation was aroused, for England did not wish the Rump to sit in perpetuity. Monk preferred to reinstate the Presbyterian majority of Pride's expulsion. This he did on February 21, and was that day appointed Captain General and Commander-in-Chief. The restored Parliament with its Presbyterian majority resolved to leave the settlement of constitutional questions to the freely elected assembly that was to follow. Such an assembly, it was known, would vote for Restoration. Somewhat indirectly, but surely, the followers of Calvin were to beckon back the jocund descendant of Mary Stuart.

If words, by any subtle, powerful combinations of wit or plead-

ing could prevent the coming of a second Charles, this was their hour. Philosophers, who did ascribe such power to eloquence, penned pamphlets. Hawkers and mercuries of London cried titles of the ribald sheets designed to fan a gale of laughter so strong that it would buoy the sails of a Merry Monarch, too long upon his travels. From the churches, pulpit nostrums were cried up because of their tincture of oil of divine unction. There were unending prophecies. In derision, Milton's nephew published *Montelion or the Philosophical Almanack, being a true and exact account of all the Revolutions that are to happen in this present year*. It made more pleasant reading than would have a narration of the current changes. These, Milton thought, had better be forgotten. In a letter to Henry Oldenburgh, he expressed a fervent wish that there be found a savior for the ending of these troubles.

Rather because he felt the stringency of duty than that he hoped he could become the needed guide or make his will felt through another, he addressed to General Monk a plan of government. No jest of the Royalists is so consummate as this appeal of Milton's to the man who of all others was most concerned in plotting for the Restoration. *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Commonwealth*⁷ was the antithesis of that plan to which Monk was committed. Nor does this argue that Milton was blind to the designs of Monk nor to the personal danger involved in opposing the numerical majority. Let him justify for himself his endeavor:

With all hazard I have ventured what I thought my duty, to speak in season and to forewarn my country in time, wherein I doubt not but there be many wise men in all places and degrees but are sorry the effects of wisdom are so little seen among us.

His plea is *in extremis*,—the testament of liberty rather than the birth cry of new government. And yet his theories are set straightly forth and methods detailed for their realization. Con-

demnation of the Stuarts has lost no jot nor tittle of his virulence. Courage is the more apparent when it is remembered that before publication of the work, London had dramatically shown her determination to restore the Stuarts. The City had been infuriated by the Rump's effort to perpetuate power by conditioning election of new members. The rumps of all the butcher-shops in London were roasted publicly. Samuel Pepys counted fourteen bonfires between St. Dunstan's and Temple Bar. He says:

At Strand Bridge I could at one view tell thirty-one fires. In King Street seven or eight; and all around burning, roasting, and drinking from rumps. There being rumps tied upon sticks and carried up and down. The butchers at the May Pole in the Strand rang a merry peal with their knives when they were going to sacrifice their rump. On Ludgate Hill there was one turning of the spit that had a rump tied upon it, and another basting of it. At one end of the street there was a whole lane of fire, and so hot that you were fair to keep on the further side.

It was with the tumultuous approval of the city that Monk had marched to Parliament and restored to it those members turned away by Colonel Pride in 1649. The Long Parliament of 1640 had resumed its sessions. The Presbyterian majority would pave the way for Restoration. Milton's disgust flames out in burning ridicule. What service could a king render this besotted people more than

to set a pompous lace upon the superficial actings of state, to pageant himself up and down in progress among the bowings and cringings of an abject people.

To submit to the rule of one,—monarch, protector or whatever, was purest folly:

That people must needs be mad or strangely infatuated that build the chief hope of their common happiness and safety on a single person.

His nation had been valorous to win their liberty in the field and yet knew neither how to use nor value it. He was amazed that basely and besottedly they wished to run their necks again into the yokes which they had lately broken and to cast down the fruits of their victory at the feet of the vanquished.

Some twenty years before, Milton had written in his *Common-place Book* that the form of a state should be fitted to its people's disposition; that the Romans in their decadence, forgetting justice and fortitude, had unfit themselves to live in a republic. He contended that there was yet a ready and easy way by which the English might escape this. The title of the pamphlet rings out bravely with almost a brazen confidence and yet an undertone, contrary and persistent, comes into dominance at last. In conclusion, Milton's sentences are forced to toll with proud but weary majesty. Always there is sonority, never the thin plea for self. His desperation is that of a champion indifferent to safety because of the concern for the security of life-dear principles. Contrast Monk's jockeying for a semblance of legality to dignify a Stuart Restoration with Milton's sturdy grappling to the law of nature:

We are not bound by any statute of preceding Parliament but by the law of nature only, which is the only law of laws truly and properly to all mankind fundamental; to which no people that will thoroughly reform but may and must have recourse.

There must be recognition of man's right to civil and religious liberty. On these foundations, with superb disdain of current difficulties, he erected the airy structure of his state. It is many-chambered, federal, each county in itself a commonwealth, having its individual councils, law courts and academies. Of them all, the capital should be the strongest and act as arbiter of interstate disputes. At the apex, there should be a Grand or General Council, from which a smaller body should be chosen to supervise administration. The name of parliament had acquired an evil con-

notation. Successive and transitory parliaments invidiously had altered and repealed old laws and created such diversity of new ones that right was obscured in a multitude of clashing debates. True law was reason codified and applied to human experience.

The Grand or General Council would have no stimulus to empty mouthings and invalid statutes. For it would be perpetual. Milton preferred that none of its members should be removed save by death or conviction of crime. As an alternative, he conceded that one third might be retired each year in accordance with the precedence of their elections. He frankly feared the consequent admission of raw and inexperienced recruits. The Council would be chosen by the minority of the worthy,—Milton's conception of the true majority. The federal nature of the government would preclude it from abuse of power. His scheme envisaged, also, the modern safeguard of a referendum and the efficiency that comes from promotion due to merit.

These proposals show the extremes to which he was willing to constrain the form of government, since they would, in his opinion, nourish its true spirit. A prefatory note addressed to General Monk after restoration of the Parliament of 1640 admonished that if that body showed unwillingness to establish a commonwealth, he should dismiss it and by the help of his victorious army convoke another that would take the wiser course. Blind Milton, we may call him in this age of demagogues and dictators, and yet we cannot boast that governments today succeed in securing principles he strove for.

Like many others, Milton believed that by sowing a whirlwind, one could harvest peace. His hasty eagerness, the very extravagance of his expedients evoke all sympathy when it is considered that he was striving, not alone for England, that once mighty, puissant nation that seemed an eagle crippled in its flight, but for the welfare of the world. For this, he deemed, was England's unique responsibility. Such exaltation of her mission seems glorious, not ludicrous, since its result was to endow with

heavy obligation her champion. He stretched to it and left the world a heritage.

It may be surmised that General Monk was not one of those who considered seriously this scheme of state. Many did discuss it. Of all of Milton's pamphlets, this, the most hastily written, had the greatest circulation. Also, it engendered the most active and ready response. There was renewal of abuse of him as a scurrilous libeler, whom God, in chastisement, had struck with blindness. The arrest of his publisher was ordered on March 28, 1660, by the clerk of the Council.

On March 16, the Long Parliament, after its issuance of writs for a free election, peacefully adjourned. Fervently, it was desired that there might be surcease, also, from the writings of its earliest defender. The Royalist jesters jingled their bells and flapped their bladders in riotous dismissal of the "Good Old Cause." For Milton there was prophesied a trip to Tyburn,—in a wheelbarrow, mayhap, for his natural contrariety would cause him to request that rather than a cart. He was berated as a heretic who would shake off his governors as he did his wives,—“four in a fortnight,—” a parasite, who by his flatteries of tyranny had run himself into the briars and wished to lead his countrymen there also.

Peace, peace, John Milton, “goose-quill champion!”⁸

CHAPTER XVII

"BLIND GUIDE"

WITH the dissolution of the Long Parliament on March 16, 1660, interest centered in the forthcoming election. The lack of restrictions on the franchise and the known wishes of the majority made it appallingly necessary for the Commonwealth faction to change the temper of the people before the voting should take place. A press, freed not by statute but by force of circumstances, made possible the outbreak of scurrility that compensated Royalists for their lately enforced silence.

It was Secretary Thurloe's opinion that the battle for the Restoration was won by the books of the Cavaliers.¹ He attributed to them a superior strength of reason, which today is less apparent than their appeal through lack of cant and dour sobriety, and their frank liaison with obscene mirth. Had Milton been able to substitute for his titanic irony and vituperation a medley of

Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,

he would have been a more popular opponent of departed royalty. To have imitated the doggerel prankings of the Cavaliers would have been a price too impossibly high even for the gain of his desires. Their attacks, none the less, penetrated beneath his armor. The disconcerting occurrences that had taken place between Milton's drafting his *Ready and Easy Way* and the writing of his prefatory address to General Monk served Roger L'Estrange in his *Be Merry and Wise*:²

I could wish [he mocks], his Excellency had been a little civiller to Mr. Milton; for just as he had finish'd his Model of a free Com-

monwealth, directing in these very terms the choice men not addicted to a single person, or House of Lords, and the work is done, in come the secluded members and spoil his subject. . . . He recommends the Rumpers to us as qualified; advises us to quit that fond opinion of successive parliaments; and suffer the persons then in power to perpetuate themselves under the name of a Grand or General Counsel and to rule us and our heirs forever. It were a great pity these gentlemen should lose their longings.

The followers of the Stuarts were prolific in their production of litanies. One, published the day after the dissolution, was happily called *A Free Parliament* and sung to the tune of "An Old Soldier of the Queen." Milton is referred to in the fourth and last stanzas:

From the Doctrine and Discipline of Now and Anon
Preserve us and our wives.

.
From Bradshaw's presumption and from Hoyle's despairs
From rotten members, blind Guides, Preaching Aldermen. . . .
Libera nos, Domine.

Later in the month, *The Spirit of the Phanatics* propounded thirty queries for the discomfiture of Roundheads, three being directed against Milton:

Whether John Milton his ready and easy way to establish a Commonwealth without readmitting of Kingship . . . be not borrowed from the States of Holland, or whether such a fool as the author deserve not to be sent to Bridewell for pretending so much good to his libel?

Whether his new frame of a Commonwealth without readmitting Kingship together with that fool Harrington's, ought not to be sent to terra incognita with the authors themselves to frame a free estate there.

Whether any ingenious person can choose but laugh at these

fools' assertions and pretence of maintaining such a ridiculous thing as a free state since in twelve years' time we have found by experience the nation never was more quiet than when governed by a single person.

On the day that these queries were circulated in London, there was published and rapidly sold a pamphlet which many have ascribed to Milton. Certainly his hand was in it, though probably only in collaboration with Needham. These two, with the printer Chapman, defended as a rearguard what now was recognized as a lost cause. Their appeal, *Plain English*,³ was addressed to Monk, the officers of his Army and to "all impartial Englishmen." As conclusion, there was sagaciously appended Parliament's declaration of 1647, which set forth the reasons at that time of discontinuing negotiations with the King. There were quoted, also, statements of General Monk, so laudatory of the Republic that the authors chose to believe his seeming disaffection was only the result of clouds of fear and jealousy that now obscured him. There is a sturdy plea for England's "dear purchased liberties, both spiritual and civil," an effort to arouse those who would "lull asleep" their consciences, forget the public interest and return back with the multitude to Egypt.

Old accusations against King Charles were revived. In particular that one once used by Milton which charged that Charles had shielded Buckingham's guilt in connection with King James' death. The pamphlet boldly praised regicide, but that of Charles, not James. It warned that for republicans there could be no retreat, either in point of safety or in point of conscience and honor. It strove to revive for the King's enemies the memory of the past.

Plain English was condemned both by the Council of State and the magistrates of London and legally suppressed. Its printer was declared against by proclamation. Despite all efforts, it was widely read, not only in London, but in the counties. As its enemies admitted, its warnings aroused alarm and even tumult.

Something of the force of *Plain English* was blunted by the accusations against Milton contained in *The Censure of the Rota*.⁴ This famous pamphlet was a censure, not only of Milton, but of the Rota itself, the views of whose members it purported to advance. The Rota was a club for the perpetuation and development of Republican government. In 1659, it held nightly meetings at the Turk's Head in the New Palace Yard at Westminster. Here the members grouped themselves around an oval table, facing each other across a passage in the center. Through this, strode Miles, the innkeeper, to serve them with a stimulating new concoction. This was coffee,—a brew that turned the clock-hands back so that the sessions could be lengthened. There was a balloting box where members cast their votes at the evening's end. Cyriack Skinner, Milton's friend and scholar, was the chairman.

To quote John Aubrey,

The discourses . . . were the most ingenious and smart ever I have heard or expect to hear and bandied with great eagerness. The arguments in the Parliament house were but flat to it. The room was every evening full as it could be crammed.

Harrington, the founder, had traveled much abroad and his club was somewhat like those Academies that Milton had enjoyed in Italy. Perhaps the greatest reasons for the vivacity of its sessions lay in the tolerance and idealism of its founder. A friend of King Charles, he had persistently argued with him the beneficence of a Commonwealth. A friend of the Republic, he warmly defended always the memory of the King. In the end, the conflict of his ideals with his experiences, the tumult of the times in which he lived and the strength of his fantasies induced insanity.

Diversity of membership within the Rota facilitated the task of Milton's critic. The *Censure* viewed his theory from many angles. A learned gentleman is made to say that Milton argues for a Commonwealth because he fears his eloquence will prove of admirable use only under a popular government.

where orators sway all the rabble before them. For who knows to how cheap a rate this goodly eloquence of yours . . . might bring the price of sprats? . . . your politics are derived from the work of declaimers . . . who left many things behind them in favour or flattery of the governments they lived under and disparagement of others to whom they were in opposition. . . . All of which you have outgone, according to your talent, in their several ways. . . . These have been the attempts of your stiff, formal eloquence, which you arm accordingly with any thing that lies in your way, right or wrong, not only begging but stealing questions and taking everything for granted that will serve your turn.

As for Milton's theory of divorce, the learned gentleman describes it as "the most impious Mahometon doctrine that was ever invented among Christians and such as will serve as well to justify any prosperous villainy amongst men." It is for this, the teaching that "any man may turn away his wife and take another as often as he pleases,"—"beliefs of Milton's practicing," that he has "achieved the honour to be styled the 'Founder of a Sect.'" Had it been known that at this time Milton, far from repentant of his earlier teachings, was writing privately of polygamy as a practice justifiable for Christians, how much severer would have been the condemnation!

There would have been matter so important for discussion as to have precluded consideration of the "windy foppery" of his oratory. A worthy knight complained that Milton fought always with the flat of his hand like a rhetorician and never contracted the logical fist; that he traded always in universals,—the region of deceit and flattery, contending that all slavery lay in the government of a single person and naught but liberty in government by many. The knight berated him for pretending to empower the people, when in reality his scheme gave an opportunity only once in an age to elect a perpetual General Council.

Milton's *Defensio* is satirized as "that admired piece written

to confute Salmasius's wife and his maid." With such scribblings, Milton had spent his eye-sight to no purpose, for his writings were sold only by chandlers and tobacco men and finally committed to the basest use by which paper could be befouled. Such, it was declared, was their desert. The pleas for liberty of conscience and Christian liberty had conduced to odious license: Certainly, the most ready and easy way to root out religion was to render it contemptible and ridiculous by giving encouragement to all manner of frenzied pretense of discovery in matters of faith. This came of teaching that the church of Christ ought have no head upon earth but the monster of many heads, the multitude. Milton was urged to remember that this multitude was identical in logic with the rabble that conducted Christ to Calvary.

The author of *The Ready and Easy Way* prescribed the attainment of civil liberty through the subjecting of laws and ordinances to individual will. The worthy knight predicted anarchy as the inevitable result. To make sovereigns of all subjects would necessitate the importation of a king that royalty might play the part of Commonwealth. There must be something for their majesties to govern!

The *coup de grâce* was reserved for Harrington, who passed verdict on Milton's perpetual Council: He marveled what politic crack in any man's skull could admit the mad notion of "securing liberty under an oligarchy, seized of the government for term of life." In effect, Milton's fine care for words and generalities, his contempt of reality had led him to propose the most ready and easy way to establish downright slavery that could possibly be contrived. Balloting balls rattled against Milton's theories in unanimous disapproval. And that the English might be apprised of this dissent, *The Censure of the Rota* was published by "Paul Giddy, Printer to the Rota, at the Sign of the Windmill in Turn-again Lane."

The divergence of Milton's grudging acceptance of the prin-

ciple of rotation in his General Council and Harrington's proposal of it in *Oceana* and *The Art of Government* was jestingly reconciled by Royalists in many schemes. They abandoned their jest only when they could gibe that the Commonwealth had coddled Harrington's brains by making a rotation in his addled noddle.⁵

Early in April, 1660, there appeared *Treason Arraigned in Answer to Plain English*.⁶ Again the Royalists were profiting by the service of Roger L'Estrange. He declared the tract he answered to be a joint production, parts of which, by subject, malice and style, appeared to be a "blot of the same pen that wrote *Iconoclastes*." The motive behind *Plain English*, that of weakening through a creation of divisions, he pronounces well designed. It was to impute to Cavaliers, to Presbyterians, to the Army and to General Monk such motives as would cause each to be an enemy of all the rest. Somewhat, the pamphlet was like bottle-ale.

Stir it—it tumults, sputters, and at last, it spends itself in foam. But nourishment or comfort there's none in it—The fellow's jadish, dull, out of his beaten and known road, but when he comes to rail against the King, he's in his element.

There was slight doubt at the time L'Estrange wrote his pamphlet but that Charles would be restored, L'Estrange rather strives to attack his opponents for their vilification of the late King than to belaud a sovereign whose execution now was generally condemned. The pamphleteer wrote craftily to frighten with threats of death or of oblivion:

You're for a Rump, it may be I'm for somewhat else. Believe me I had rather live poor and honest, than hang rich and treacherous.

And then referring to a statement in *Plain English*, he says that the author

solicits for his head when under pretext of conscience he labours for a party. And yet, methinks, he should not need. Alas! He's but the Rump's solicitor. He pleads their cause, takes their fee and vanishes. Impudent creature, to presume to be afraid; as if a hangman would disgrace himself to meddle with him.

These were hits at Marchmont Needham, who had written so variously for different factions that he was known as "Jack of all Sides" or a political "didapper,"—a duck that makes its way by dives and reappearings.

Certain of the pages had suggested authorship more noble. In consideration of the author of these, L'Estrange wrote:

His rage against the royal line disturbs his reason (otherwise smooth enough to delude such as are not well aware of him). Whether it be the agony and horror of a wounded soul, which thus transports him, or that in these excesses he only personates the last convulsion of a heart-broken faction, it matters not.

In conclusion L'Estrange derisively prays for all the rout of the Republicans, naming among these Milton:

Help a company of poor rebellious devils that only for murdering their prince, destroying three glorious nations, breaking the bonds of faith both with God and man, trampling upon religion and laws, exercising an absolute tyranny over their fellow subjects . . . in fine, for playing the devil in God's name, are now in danger to lose the rewards of all their virtues.

There was a strange scent in the air during the period of the elections. It was as though the blood of a king, long dead, had greater potency than all the heady fragrance of the spring. It terrified those in whom the memory was keen of the several parts they had taken in the late tragedy. There were plots against the life of General Monk, whose tenure of power was shaping so inevitably the Restoration. The very name of Charles II height-

ened fear. News came that on the fourth of April, he had extended gracious pardon to those who once had warred against the King. The exception to this fair sounding Declaration of Breda was more remarked by some than was its clemency: in regard to the punishment of those most guilty, Charles would abide by the decision of Parliament.

On the sixteenth of April, Needham fled to Holland. He had been Milton's latest partner in defense of the Republic and, turn-coat though he was, he had ability. The *Publick Intelligencer*,⁷ one of his newsbooks for the government, chronicled his departure as due to sense of guilt and assured its readers that it had no connection with March Needham. One printer of the Commonwealth remained, Livewell Chapman. Desborough implored him to publish more tracts of the tenor of *Plain English*.

There was only John Milton who could write them. With insufficient time for fresh composition, he worked upon his *Ready and Easy Way*,—amending, expanding, determined not to modify the brazen effrontery of its title. He would publish it as an address to the free parliament that was to be convened on April 25, 1660.

Meantime a Royalist divine roused Milton's anger by a sermon which anticipated Parliament's decision, declaring boldly that the Second Charles already reigned. "The Fear of God and the King" was its subject. It has been suggested that Milton's answer, *Brief Notes upon a Late Sermon*,⁸ might better have been called "Fear God and the King." Rejecting the conception of England as monarchical, he luminously depicts the dangers that would attend her, should she become so. A second Charles would prove either a log, that would lie heavy on his subjects, without doing anything to deserve his dignity and maintenance, or a stork that would devour them.

Turning from this "pulpit mountebank," Milton addressed the people with exalting flattery:

Free Commonwealths [he said], have been ever counted fittest and properest for civil, virtuous, and industrious nations, abounding with prudent men worthy to govern.

This government England might still enjoy. To do otherwise would be sottishly to court disaster. Fear the King!

That a victorious people should give up themselves again to be vanquished was never yet heard of, seems rather void of all reason and good policy, and will in all probability subject the subduers to the subdued—will expose to revenge, to beggary, to ruin and perpetual bondage the victors under the vanquished.

It would have been better for the dignity of the Royalists' cause had Milton's attacks remained unanswered. The Declaration of Breda should have set a tone of clemency for those who had suffered from the Revolution much less than exiled Charles. But certain of the Royalists were bitter. Of their number was L'Estrange. He published on April 20, 1660, a pamphlet, bearing as its motto, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Its title, *No Blind Guides*,⁹ at once revealed it as an attack upon John Milton, whose infirmity, and the cause of it, had been trumpeted by his own eloquence and the attacks of pamphleteers in England and abroad.

The blindness was well merited, L'Estrange believed, since Milton had stared too long and too maliciously upon the portrait of the King.¹⁰ Murder was less evil than Milton's defense of it and his irreverent prying into the pieties of the late King. Milton's acts had proven that devils "may indue human beings." He had been an incubus to his own wife, an evil counselor to the nation. He had put his infernal arguments into the traveling garb of Latin and sent them journeying abroad. Christians feared to pray for him, thinking him the devil incarnate, rather than unregenerate man. There is a query whether he is not of that regiment which carried the herd of swine headlong into the sea.

L'Estrange claimed that Milton had distorted Scripture to his purpose and fettered truth in such a snare that to untie each knot were tedious. Nevertheless, the Royalist engenders weariness by so attempting. Milton's logic is fallible. By toilsome arguments it can be battered down, but for his antagonist to accomplish this, he must bore his reader. The eloquence of Milton's praise of those first principles that touch divinity leaves finally a stronger impression than the logic of his adversaries. There is pity for the attacks on his blindness, even though in earlier days he had not spared his enemies' infirmities. The Royalist answer to *Eye Salve for the Army* pronounces the medicine condemned in that pamphlet as a medium of the same composition "which (by general report) strook Milton blind and 'tis his interest that you should be so too."

It was apparent that there would be many volunteers, should it become necessary to guide the blind guide to the scaffold.¹¹

On April 25, 1660, the free Parliament was convened. It was known that the elections had gone exultantly in favor of the Royalists. During the first days of routine business before the great question of the Restoration should be brought forward, Milton published again his *Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Commonwealth*.

The work bore the author's name in full, although all other defenders of the Republic were now content with anonymity. The motto indicated that whereas Milton had once made his plea to Sulla (Monk) he spoke now to the people. Those passages describing the benefits of the perpetual General Council were expanded; those favoring the adoption of Harrington's principle of rotation were muted. There was a heightening of the denunciation of monarchy; exaltation again for the bout with Salmasius, dead champion of the late King. A significant change is the deletion of sentences arguing against the establishment of a state church. In private writings, Milton was making fresh advances in his wish for individualism in religion, but it seemed

expedient to limit his efforts at this time to combatting loss of civil liberty.

He could hope for no mercy from the Stuarts. His anger had the fury of desperation. He sought to terrify by a picture of what the Restoration meant. Revenue for Church and Court would have to be exacted to the detriment and confusion of men's estates and purses. Accounts and reparation would be required. There would be suits, indictments, inquiries, discoveries, complaints,—everywhere vengeful and dangerous distrust. The newly-royalized Presbyterians would find their early deeds remembered. The insolences of recent ribald pamphlets were straws to point a fast approaching hurricane. Those late converts to monarchy, so clamorous now in their acclaims of Charles, could expect no more than the suspicion felt for friends but newly won. They would be neglected, discarded, perhaps prosecuted for their earlier treason.

It is true that in Milton's pamphlets all too often he speaks with the tongue of men and has not charity, but more often than is given to most, he succeeds in speaking with the tongue of angels. God's work it is to raise from stones children of liberty and these Milton aspired to aid through eloquence. He urges that, "though they seem now choosing them a captain back from Egypt," they take thought and consider whither they are rushing; that they exhort, also, the torrent of the people not to be so impetuous, to stay their ruinous proceedings, justly and timely fearing to what a precipice of destruction they are hurried by the deluge of their epidemic madness. He mixes his figures and multiplies his adjectives against what he believed to be the general defection of a misguided and abused multitude.

The answer to this last of the political pamphlets of John Milton was immediate: "G. S." a "Lover of Loyalty," in *The Dignity of Kingship Asserted*, merged with his blame so much of praise that he seems either to court Milton's services for the opposing faction or, as an Englishman, to feel irrepressible pride

in the work that had glorified his mother tongue. He had read many of Milton's pamphlets and referred not to the immediate quarrel only, but to theories that had been advanced preceding it. Milton is dubbed a "state juggler," who has come upon the stage post-haste to becloud the eyes of the people with fantasies and metaphysics. He acknowledges that, through Milton's efforts, indignities have been heaped upon the learned Salmasius. He praises Milton's shrewd wit and eloquence, regrets that they should be used for a denial of what was true and what was honest. He has observed Milton in his search for freedom—read the divorce tracts, and gibes at his efforts to reconcile marriage and liberty. He has studied, too, the attacks upon an Established Church.

Since you are so wise as to throw aside your wife because your waspish spirit could not agree with her qualities, and your crooked phantasy could not be brought to take delight in her, you then grew so free, that as for your religion, you could take the Christian liberty to turn libertine at large, or in plain terms an atheist.

Milton's poison has crept far and infected many: "Dangerous, villainous wits misapplied have done more mischief with their pens than the soldier with his weapons."¹²

In spring of 1660, the pen of a Latin Secretary fallen from power was not so potent as the pen of an exiled prince to whom a wistful people turned for leadership. Phrases of the Declaration of Breda were quoted in the streets. On May 1, the document was communicated to the newly elected members of a free assemblage. Its clemency offered surcease from long contention. Charles promised

a free and general pardon to all, except only such persons as shall hereafter be excepted by Parliament. Those only excepted, let all our subjects, how faulty soever, rely upon the word of a king, solemnly given by this present Declaration, that no crime whatsoever com-

mitted against us, or our Royal Father before the publication of this, shall ever rise in judgment or be brought in question against any of them to the least endamagement of them, either in their lives, liberties or estates or (as far forth as lies in one person) so much as to the prejudice of their reputations.

And to these comfortable words were added others for the solace of schismatics:

Because the passion and uncharitableness of the times have produced several opinions in religion, by which men are engaged in parties and animosities against each other, we do declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion.

The response from Parliament was such as had been looked for,—a resolution that “according to the ancient and fundamental laws of this kingdom, the Government is, and ought to be, by Kings, Lords and Commons.”

The work of General Monk, the Cavaliers and royalist Presbyterians had been well done. It was gratefully accepted by the populace. To Samuel Pepys, this was “the happiest May-day that hath been many a year to England.” To Cromwell’s former Secretary, its issue was problematic. Word of a king, the laws of the country, resolution of parliament—on these would the government be erected. Milton had visioned something transcending this,—the individual sovereignty of all such citizens as were virtuous, observance of the laws of nature, the supereminence of reasoned freedom in home, in church, in politics. As to what form the externals of government should take, his opinions had been various and often ill determined. He had labored for an England radiantly new, a beacon for a weary, sin-defrauded world. He had failed. The penalty for an abortive effort at creation is very often death.

CHAPTER XVIII

FUGITIVE AND PRISONER

ON May 7, 1660, the eve of the proclamation of Charles II as King of England, the sometime Latin Secretary of Councils of the Long Parliament, the Rump and two Protectorates had need of traveling money. The £2000 he had deposited with the Commissioners of the Excise was not now retrievable. However, he was able to receive from them a bond for £400. This he transferred to "Cyriack Skinner of Lincoln's Inn, Gentleman," affixing to the deed of conveyance his seal with its device of the eagle of two heads.

With the money that his friend advanced, he made provision for his three young daughters. He was taken then, quite secretly, from Petty France to Smithfield and so across the square where men had fed their lives to flames for greater glory of their faith. From the west side, he passed beneath a low arch, beautiful in architecture, and so entered into Bartholomew Close. There the ages had left a labyrinthine legacy of tortuous passages and shrouded courts. The genius of the place was still Rahere, the minstrel and master of revels to Henry I whose effigy, serenely beautiful, one yet may see in old St. Bart's. Rahere had sung for the court, counseled his King and labored for the health of broken Englishmen. One thinks the Norman singer must have welcomed Milton. They had both served beauty, loved England and known loneliness. Death and misfortune reconciled divergence.

Milton remained in the home of a friend and awaited the action of the government.¹ Hatred was not a vice of Charles the Second's, but the matter of Milton's punishment was one for

Parliament's determining, and the enemies of the Latin Secretary were many. The pack of pamphleteers and balladists were hot upon him. They would not permit England to forget how early had been his advocacy of regicide, how lately he had stood as its defender. Between the proclamation of the King and his royal entry into London on May 29, there were threats, warnings, provocations, snarling doggerel, that Milton left unanswered.

On May 14, there appeared *Britain's Triumph for her unparalleled deliverance and her joyful celebrating of her most gracious, incomparable King Charles II.* It prescribed three forms of death:

But who appears here with the curtain drawn?
 What Milton! are you come to see the sight?
 Oh *Image-breaker!* poor knave! had he sown
 That which the fame of made him crye out-right,
 He 'ad taken counsel of Achitophell,
 Swung himself weary, and so gone to hell.

This is a sure divorce, and the best way;
 Seek, sir, no further, now the trick is found,
 To put a sullen knave from 's wife, that day
 He doth repent his choyce, stab'd, hang'd or drown'd
 Will make all sure and further good will bring,
 The wretch will rail no more against his King.
 This must attaque, what holds out still,
 And is impregnable, the Will.
 This must enchant our conscious hands,
 To slumber in like guilty bands,
 While like the froward Miltonist,
 We our old nuptial knot untwist:
 And with the hands, late faith did joyn,
 The bill of plain divorce now signe.²

A few days later another pamphlet accused Milton of having contrived, with the help of Needham, Jack Hall and the devil,

all the indignities and disgraces that Cromwell had endeavored to bring upon the royal family, the nobility and the three nations.³

On May 29, 1660, Charles II entered his loyal capital, London, with bonfires, bells, songs and debauchery made jovial, bestial welcome for a merry, bestial king. In double darkness, the days tolled slowly for blind Milton. Newsbooks of the Cavaliers, which friends brought to him, listed the names of the seven whom Parliament would not permit to be included in the King's forgiveness. On the seventh of June, it had been determined these men should pay for opposition with their lives. A few days after, it was recommended to the King that twenty others be excepted from the General Act and left liable to penalties and forfeiture not extending to life.

At about the same time, the House considered the malefaction of John Milton and John Goodwin in using their pens in service of the regicides. The Attorney General was ordered to prepare an indictment against Milton for having written the *First Defence* and *Eikonoklastes* and against Goodwin for his *Obstructors of Justice*, a pamphlet free in its quotations of Milton's arguments for regicide. On June 16, it was resolved that his Majesty should be desired to order these books to be called in and burned by the authorities.⁴

Decisions as to what exceptions should be made from the general policy of forgiveness consumed much time in the House and delayed the drafting and passage of the Bill of Indemnity and Oblivion,—the fulfillment of the promises of the Declaration of Breda. Some of the seven doomed to capital punishment escaped. The number was again completed and additional names appended. A few days after the first action taken against Milton and Goodwin, Parliament added the latter to the list of twenty who were to suffer punishment short of the death penalty. Milton was left under indictment and so excepted from the General Act. He was in the unique position of being included neither in the list of those reserved for capital punishment nor those

who were to be punished short of death. It would seem that the efforts of his friends to thwart the royalist desire for vengeance had reached a stalemate. His former assistant, Andrew Marvell, now member for Hull, was active in assistance. Marvell gained aid from Sir William Davenant, whom Milton had saved in 1650, when the Royalist had been in even greater extremities. Two who were close to General Monk, a brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Clarges, and another, Secretary Morrice, seem also to have used their friendly offices.

King Charles, himself, was too sagacious to wish to martyrize a blind poet for the strengthening of the Republicans, too urbane to feel so primitive an emotion as lust for a blood vengeance. He watched with cynical amusement the transit of the bill from the House to the Lords, back to the House and then again to the Lords and finally to himself for signature. He noted the addition of new names that Parliament had excluded from royal clemency. One thinks the King remembered the jests against Salmasius, against Bontia, the serving maid, and du Moulin and welcomed the omission of Milton from the death list. And the second Charles was not bereft of admiration for certain qualities, which if he did not lack in stark entirety, he consciously concealed.

On August 29, 1660, the long debated bill became the General Act of Pardon and Indemnity. It could hardly have been hoped that Milton's enemies would overlook exclusion of his name, since on August 13, the proclamation had been placarded for the calling in of two of his seditious pamphlets.⁵ Anthony Wood has recorded how the command was obeyed at Oxford, by removing the books from all the libraries and most scrupulously from the Bodleian. He admired Milton's sharp biting and satirical wit, his learning and philosophy. He regretted that he was not honestly principled and capable of service to the King.

The public burning of the books on August 29, made more glaring Milton's omission from the lists of those about to be



By the King.

A PROCLAMATION

For calling in, and suppressing of two Books written by *John Milton*; the one Intituled, *Johannis Miltoni Angli pro Populo Anglicano Defensio, contra Claudii Anonymi alias Salmasti, Defensionem Regiam*; and the other in answer to a Book Intituled, *The Pourtraiture of his Sacred Majesty in his Solitude and Sufferings*. And also a third Book Intituled, *The Obstructors of Justice*, written by *John Goodwin*.

CHARLES R.



Whereas *John Milton*, late of Westminster, in the County of Middlesex, hath Published in Print two several Books The one Intituled, *Johannis Miltoni Angli pro Populo Anglicano Defensio, contra Claudii Anonymi, alias Salmasti, Defensionem Regiam*. And the other in Answer to a Book Intituled, *The Pourtraiture of his Sacred Majesty in his Solitude and Sufferings*. In both which are contained sundry Treasonable Passages against Us and Our Government, and most Impious endeavours to seduce the good and unmatched Purcher of Our late Dear Father, of Glorious Memory. And whereas *John Goodwin*, late of Coleman-Street, London, Clerk, hath also published in Print, a Book Intituled, *The Obstructors of Justice*, Written in defiance of the traitorous Sentence against his said late Majesty, And whereas the said *John Milton* and *John Goodwin*, are both fled, so to obscure themselves, that no endeavors used for their apprehension can take effect, whereby they might be brought to Legal Trial, and deservedly receive condigne punishment for their Treasons and Offences.

Now to the end that Our good Subjects may not be corrupted in their Judgments, with such wicked and Traitorous principles, as are dispersed and scattered throughout the beforementioned Books, We, upon the motion of the Commons in Parliament now assembled. doe hereby strictly charge and Command, all

and every Person and Persons whatsoever, who live in any City, Burrough, or Town Incorporate, within this our Kingdom of England, the Dominion of Wales, and Town of Berwick upon Tweed, in whose hands any of those Books are, or hereafter shall be, That they, upon pain of Our high Displeasure, and the consequence thereof, do forthwith, upon publication of this Our Command, or within Ten days immediately following, deliver, or cause the same to be delivered to the Chief Magistrate, or other chief Officer of Magistracy, in any of the said Cities, Burroughs, or Towns Incorporate, where such person or persons so live; or, if living out of any City, Burrough, or Town Incorporate, then to the next Justice of Peace adjoining to his or their dwelling, or place of abode, or if living in either of Our Universities, then to the Vice-Chancellor of that University where he or they do reside.

And in default of such voluntary delivery, which we do expect in obedience of Our said Command, That then and after the time before limited, expired, the said Chief Magistrate of all and every the said Cities, Burroughs, or Towns Incorporate, the Justices of the Peace in their several Counties, and the Vice-Chancellors of Our said Universities respectively, are hereby Commanded to Seize and Take, all and every the Books aforesaid, in whose hands or possession forever they shall be found, and certify the names of the Offenders unto Our Privy Council.

And we do hereby also give special Charge and Command to the said Chief Magistrates, Justices of the Peace, and Vice-Chancellors respectively, That they cause the said Books which shall be so brought unto any of their hands, or seized or taken as aforesaid, by virtue of this Our Proclamation, to be delivered to the respective Sheriffs of those Counties where they respectively live, the said and next Assizes that shall after happen. And the said Sheriffs are hereby also required, in time of holding such Assizes, to cause the same to be publicly burnt by the hand of the Common Hangman.

And we do further strictly Charge and Command, That no man hereafter presume to print, vend, sell, or disperse any the aforesaid Books, upon pain of Our heavy Displeasure, and of such further punishment, as for their presumption in that behalf, may any way be inflicted upon them by the Laws of this Realm.

Given at Our Court at Whitehall the 13th day of August, in the Twelfth year of Our Reign, 1660.

LONDON, Printed by *John Bill* and *Christopher Barker*, Printers to the Kings most Excellent Majesty, 1660.

THE BURNING OF THE BOOKS

Proclamation of King Charles II for the Burning in 1660 of Milton's *Defence of the English People* and his *Eikonoklastes*, also of a Book by John Goodwin defending the Sentence against Charles I. Reproduced by permission of the Widener Library, Harvard University

punished. He had advocated regicide in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, while yet the King was living. The offense seemed greater far than many of the acts which now occasioned condemnation. During the passage of the bill, George Starkey had addressed to Parliament a pamphlet with the reminiscent title: *Royal and Other Innocent Blood Crying Aloud to Heaven for due Vengeance*.⁶ It recalled Milton's glorification of regicide. In a broadside, *The Picture of the Good Old Cause*,⁷ the Latin Secretary is listed with many other of the King's opponents who had met death or some misfortune that made a death of life. The broadside is black-bordered and Milton is referred to as one "that writ two books against the King and Salmasius his Defence of Kings struck totally blind, he not being much above forty years old."

He was twelve years older and the lines upon his face must have deepened during this first year of the Restoration. The destruction of his books by mayors, bailiffs and justices of the peace throughout all England,—those works which he esteemed the precious life blood of the nation, was as the destruction of a vital part of his own being. The royal proclamation, denouncing the "wicked and traitorous principles" of his books, his "endeavor to justify the horrid and unmatchable murder of King Charles," the statement as to the efforts made for his arrest and condign punishment imposed a dread on Milton. That he escaped, Bishop Burnet has recorded was "to the scandal of all people."

It was a strange omission if he was forgot and an odd strain of clemency if it was intended he should be forgotten.

Milton knew it was to the dissatisfaction of many. Pamphlets continued to appear even against dead leaders and debates went forward as to how vengeance could be wreaked upon their buried bodies. One ribald balladist proclaimed in *The Blazing Star*⁸ that "Noll's Red Nose" had been taken from the tomb, and named Milton as one who, in former days, had defended it. It

was not to be long before ridicule of the dead face would be followed by mutilation.

The legend persists that Milton's friends, to rescue him from public and private enmity, staged a mock funeral,—an expedient which amused King Charles. The royal jester is said to have applauded the policy of Milton's escaping death by such a seasonable show of dying.⁹ The only truth in the story seems to be its indication of the solicitude of his friends and their devotion to him. For the records show that, irrespective of the omission of his name from those who were excepted, he served a prison term. It could not have been a long one. The Royal Proclamation of August 13, 1660, refers to Milton and Goodwin as having either fled or having so obscured themselves that no endeavor used for their apprehension could take effect.

The journals of the House record that Milton's release was ordered December 15, 1660. The warrant for his arrest had not been repealed and it would seem that a sergeant-at-arms, sedulous in his search for fees, preferred rather to act in accordance with the warrant than to observe the pardon extended to all not specifically omitted from the General Act of Indemnity. Probably the brief detention was less a punishment than a kindly stratagem to circumvent the malice of Milton's enemies. The earliest life of Milton tells of the episode in this wise:

He early sued out his pardon; and by means of that when the Sergeant of the House of Commons had officially seized him, was quickly set at liberty.

The sergeant's fees were excessive and complaint of this was made by Andrew Marvell and two officers of the Army. It was ordered by the House that Mr. Milton and the sergeant appear before the Committee for Privileges regarding the matter. There was opposition against making any adjustment. Milton had been Latin Secretary to Cromwell and deserved hanging, cried one of the members.

Irrespective of the Order of the House, Milton did not appear to state his case. The kindly disposition of his friends had induced them to become officious. He could not sue and least of all on such a score as this. He who had contended against the King himself and spoken to a world against the monarchy could not bicker over jail fees:

To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deifie his power,
Who from the terrour of this Arm so late
Doubted his Empire, that were low indeed.

These and many lines more in the earlier books of *Paradise Lost*, exalt defiance and the unconquerable will. They take their tinge from the bitter lines of Milton's own experience between the years of 1658 and the Stuart restoration. For it was then he wrote them.

The brief sentence, the loss of his savings and of an estate worth £60 a year at Westminster, caused suffering less acute than the apparent failure of his hopes for English liberties, his realization of the degradation that had fallen on her people. He sensed their shame as they groveled as sycophants or licked broad lips at the lascivities of Restoration drama. He saw how avidly they accepted the base coin of license for heaven-minted liberty.

He could not cloister himself so close as not to be pursued by the noise of wastrels, who believed they had found freedom. The tumult of riot, injury and outrage ascended higher than the city's loftiest towers; and when night fell there wandered forth the "sons of Belial, flown with insolence and wine." He was blind witness of the lust for cruelty, seeing more clearly than others the dank blood that spilled from quartered bodies of the regicides. In his nostrils there was the stench of the noisome disinterments of Cromwell, Ireton and the venerable Bradshaw. Their bodies were gibbeted at Tyburn on the anniversary of the execution of King Charles I. Creak of the ropes and turn of the bodies, Milton

must have sensed all this. The conquerors regarded as pollution the remains of the great Admiral who had made good England's claim of supremacy at sea. Milton heard of Blake's disinterment from his resting place at Westminster. Nor was deference shown to the poor flesh of Cromwell's mother,—she who had rejoiced in the Protector's leadership and striven prayerfully to curb his greed for personal power. With a dozen bodies of others to whom the state had accorded the mortuary honors of Westminster, hers and that of Blake were disinterred and huddled in a common grave. Milton was their mourner.

He had returned to Holborn, where once an honorable deputation had waited upon him to request his service for the state. In his house near Red Lion Fields, he strove to shut away those rumors that ever came to him from friends, the serving maids, tradespeople, who chattered to his daughters.

In December, there was a disinterring of the musty quarrel with Salmasius. The philosopher's posthumous reply,—two chapters with another incomplete, was sold in London as a testament of hate. It condemned Milton to burning pitch or scalding oil for his defense of evil and for false Latinity. There was an accusation of infidelity against his dead wife and there were other libels that found shelter behind a dedication to King Charles. Milton's answer was silence.

Presbyterians and Baptists to the number of two thousand were ejected as nonconformists on St. Bartholomew's Day. And yet the Anglicans were not satiate. Their desires were made known by *The Tears, Sighs, Complaints and Prayers of the Church of England*, written by one Dr. Gauden, artificer of the *King's Book*. He was secretly soliciting a bishopric for his work in that regard. Certain of the great were fearful that he would betray his authorship of *Eikon Basiliké* and so make Milton happy.¹⁰ Perhaps even this would not have banished apathy. Many of the ejected ministers were friends, but now there was no defense for Smectymnuus or his brethren.

Du Moulin was boasting in England of his attacks on Milton in *Regii Sanguinis Clamor*, the book which Milton had ascribed to Morus. The government recompensed Du Moulin with a prebend in Canterbury and other sweets of spiritual office.

In December of 1661, Morus arrived. Soon after, he preached at St. James Chapel before the King, the Duke of York, the French Ambassador and many others of more prestige than piety. So eloquent they found him that he was accorded signal honor,—the privilege of preaching the commemorative sermon on the anniversary of the execution of King Charles. The date was now a fast-day for the nation.

Some have recorded that it was fear that kept John Milton private. There seems to have been sufficient reason for withdrawal without supposing cowardice. He was much alone and slept ill, says Richardson, the painter. "When restless he would ring for the person who wrote for him, which was his daughter commonly." Then he would write what he had composed. Sometimes it would "flow with great ease."

This was withdrawal,—not shelter from the crowd, not the cessation from translations of dispatches, not abandonment of pamphlet warfare, not even the oblivion of sleep. This was withdrawal: the intense activity of a mind escaping from the world,—even from that England for which Milton had striven with all the passion of one sanctified for service.

The epic he had visioned in his youth and thought on vaguely the while he strode the road of politics, that radiant apostrophe to light that he had written in murky London after sun-drenched Italy, those mighty rhymeless lines, compact of present sorrow and past joy, that in two years had multiplied and ranged themselves in orderly endeavor,—these, now, he won too. There would be seclusion to invite his active thought. Far messengers whom he had speeded on their missions with letters of credentials, had journeyed not so far as his intent, had seen no king so great as Him whom Milton visioned. Salmasius,

Du Moulin and Gauden, not these nor any of his enemies could follow. But earthly things, the talk of men in council, civil dissension, strife of good with evil, and even the warfare of mailed hosts, these did his mind irradiate and so exalt that heaven was made brighter by the dark depths of Milton's life. He was translator still,—his task more difficult than work for any of the councils. It was through earthly words to bring the voice of God to Englishmen, to sublimate to the empyrean the scant experience of a Latin Secretary, son to a scrivener of Bread Street, and through words to find such argument as justified the ways of God to man.

This was escape. This was withdrawal,—an eagle-flight, a stretch, a striving, and then the words came easily. The coldness, the small, poor house in Holborn, the daughter, shivering, reluctant at dictation, the darkness of the night and of spent vision,—all these were left behind. This was escape. This was withdrawal.

PART III

VICTORY

And calm of mind all passion spent.

—*Samson Agonistes.*

CHAPTER XIX

POET OF OTHER WORLDS

AT Holborn and in Jewin Street, where Milton moved in 1661, it was scarcely noticed that Oliver's sometime Secretary lived in retirement and accepted silently the Stuart rule. The change in the political situation caused no *volte face* in Milton's politics. Acceptance of a change in government was nothing new to him. He awaited still the attainment of free life in church and state and home, but his record as a regicide and his known antipathy to monarchy precluded connection with the government. He was over fifty, blind and lately pardoned, to the scandal of those who would have preferred to see him hanged. He forebore the writing of political pamphlets.¹ Broad-sides and ballads, he would never traffic in and the stage was too abhorred of Independents for drama to be used to propagate their ideas. Besides, he preferred to write over his own proper name,—a name that now was meaningful to England.

He chose to devote his dark hours to the completion of his epic. It offered opportunity to write of Heaven, Hell and Paradise and yet say much that might redound to England's good and England's glory. Milton had striven to guide the world by animating England. The time had come when it was necessary to envision the universe so that particulars might be imparted to a microcosm. A few books of *Paradise Lost* had been finished. They lacked only correction and revision. To work upon a scheme so grandiose was to recall all moods and tenses of an active life: his father's nurturing care; questions aroused in childhood by puppet shows of Heaven and Hell and by the frescoes of the cloisters of St. Paul's. It was to refurbish theology

learned of the Cambridge schoolmen and in study for bitter controversy. It was to sense again the paradisal joys of Horton; to think of Italy,—the hosts of angels limned by her poet-painters, the visit to Galileo, Dante-readings, beauty of Leonora. It was to recall a hasty marriage, the flight of a young wife and tender reconciliation, the long woe of disillusionment; debates of councils, pomp of ambassadors, the insolence of office, defeat of hopes and the discovery of a greater good,—a life's contention for right-reasoned liberty.

And always to work upon the epic was to remember light and dark, the twilight of the dawn, the dawning twilight, the pagantry of heaven, progress of sun and moon's processional. Throbbing through memory, there was the rhythm of music that Milton had been bred to as a child, that had companioned him throughout his life. It was symphonic,—music for the primeval cathedral of the forests, music with the magic that makes cathedrals of man's thoughts.

Some wondered why there were no diatribes from Milton's vitriolic pen against the gibbeting of the poor carcasses of Cromwell and of Bradshaw. In June of 1662, the chastened Independents were alarmed for the safety of Sir Henry Vane and General Lambert, on trial for treason. Milton's journeyings to other worlds, perhaps relieved him of anxiety over events in this. Perhaps, his thoughts were fixed on goals these men had failed to reach for England's good. Their trial was short. The verdict, guilty. By the King's favor, Lambert was reprieved. Vane preferred to indict the Restoration in defense. He was executed. Milton wrote no elegies. Men were for him but instruments for the empowering of ideas. His cause was not a lost one. In a new medium and with deepened convictions, he worked still for the future.

Ruthlessly, he bent his household to his will. One daughter he excused because her speech was hesitant, but Mary and Deborah, for the enriching and excitation of his mind, were made to

read to him. One tongue was enough for a woman, Milton jested. He had his daughters trained to read in many languages but gave them no instruction in their meanings. Isaiah, Homer and Ovid, they read to him, pronouncing every word with clear precision, for his ear was curious and his temper short. So often in this manner, they served their father that they retained the memory of long passages,—no word of which they understood. Deborah, to the day of her death, when she was over seventy, remembered them.

Anne Milton could not write and Mary did so only badly. A generation later Deborah's daughter told one of his biographers that Milton believed it a practice unnecessary for women. For lip-service, the younger two were excellent. They read to him from the Hebrew, the Syriac, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish and French. At other times, he kept them distant from him. It is not surprising that Mistress Anne, Mary and little Deborah were in dumb rebellion. They combined together and counseled his maid-servant to cheat him in her marketings. They made away with his books and would have sold all of them to the dunghill women.

Old neighbors read to him for the honor of his company. Andrew Marvell and Cyriack Skinner still were faithful. Milton's nephew, Edward Phillips, came. His nephew, John, did not. From time to time young men that Milton taught served as amanuenses. The difficulty of finding one who could be proficient and agreeable was a great one. Sometimes the fashion of literary men of his day demanded an answer to a Latin epistle. Painfully he spelt each word, dictated every capital and comma. Blindness prevented correction of the proof. He could only plead forgiveness for those errors that his patience and learning could not prevail against. Friendly eyes would pity and forgive.

As for the epic, Milton knew it must be read by men of many minds and that it must pass ordeal by licenser. By act of Parliament, 1662, such procedure had again become obligatory. The humor of the King was gratified by committing poetry to the

Archbishop of Canterbury. The ecclesiast delegated its supervision to his chaplains. They and the Restoration dramatists were mutually discommoded.

Of the many who strove to serve John Milton for love of erudition or for sympathy with genius, we may be sure none was a chaplain. In 1662, his physician, Dr. Nathan Paget, introduced into his service a young Quaker, Thomas Ellwood, who has left an account of the friendship that developed. Ellwood esteemed Milton, not only as a "gentleman of great note for learning throughout the world," but as a kindly teacher.² The master improved his friend's pronunciation and, when the reading voice betrayed a lack of understanding, explained the Latin passages with such gentleness and patience as from his daughters he withheld.

The lessons were laborious. After six weeks of them and other study, Ellwood's health broke down. On his recovery, he worked as before, until with other Quakers he was sentenced to a three-months' prison term. By sedulous care he had made his reading agreeable and Milton regretted that, on his release, he went to Buckinghamshire and became the tutor there to children of a mutual friend.

Too often the blind man was forced back upon dependence on his daughters. At times he lay awake whole nights. Sometimes his gout was so severe that he could not rise in the morning. At whatever hour he pleased, he rang for Mary, and Mary Powell's daughter came, and in bad script and poorer spelling³ took down the words that justified the ways of God, the Father. Edward Phillips says that the weariness of this tortured writing, close confinement and the reading without understanding was endured for a long time till the irksomeness could not longer be concealed and broke out more and more into "expressions of uneasiness."

The nephew, coming from time to time, had the perusal of the epic from its beginnings, "in a parcel of ten, twenty or thirty

verses at a time." These were written "by whatever hand came next." They wanted correction as to orthography and pointing. As the summer came on, Milton no longer showed his verses. He told his nephew that his vein never flowed happily but from the autumnal equinoctial to the vernal and that whatever he attempted at other times was never to his satisfaction.

The atmosphere of Heaven and Paradise was too rarefied and that of Hell too oppressive to permit complete desertion of the house in Jewin Street. And the atmosphere of the house in Jewin Street was too mundane long to sustain the soaring spirit when it did fall back to it.

For Milton, his home was made more agreeable by a third marriage. The woman that he married in February of 1663 was a cheerful creature of Dr. Paget's providing, Elizabeth Minshull. Milton called her Betty. She had a sweet voice, but no ear for music. She was skilled in cookery. Mary Milton had been told of the impending marriage by a maid-servant. That was no news, she said, but if she could hear of her father's death, that would be something.

Aubrey says that *Paradise Lost* was finished in 1663, the year of the marriage. It was not published until four years later. Perhaps, the greatest reason for delay was the scrupulous care Milton expended on revision. Even after his losses by the Restoration, his income was sufficient to free him from the necessity of hasty publishing.

Soon after marriage, he removed his family, goods and chattels to a garden-house in Artillery Walk, near drill-grounds of the trained-bands of the City and near Grub Street. Here he was sought by one of the officers of state and desired to use his pen on behalf of the government. This, he refused. A member of the House of Lords came later to consult him on the matter of a divorce projected between John, Lord Rosse, and his wife, the eldest daughter of the Marquis of Dorchester. Milton was considered to be the person most "knowing in that affair." ⁴

Indeed, the world that he had left had not forgotten him. He had been cited in *The Traitor's Perspective Glass*⁵ of 1662 for his seditious, antimonarchical books against the King in answer to Salmasius. London was reminded that Milton had been

stricken blind soon after and could never since by any art or skill either recover his sight or preserve his books from being burned by the common hangman.

In the sermon preached before the Court on January 13, 1663, the anniversary of the "murder" of Charles I, Milton was referred to as the "Latin advocate," who, like a "blind adder," had spat his venom on the King's person and the King's cause.⁶ *Heath's Chronicle*, published the same year, repeated the charge that God had punished him by blindness. *Eikōnoklastes* was cited as an impudent and blasphemous libel, "since, deservedly burnt by the Common Executioner."

The Comte de Comminges, French ambassador, reporting to his King, named Milton alone as worthy of regard among contemporary Englishmen. It was regrettable, he added, that Milton had made himself more infamous by his noxious writing than the very tormentors and assassins of the King.

The old enemy, Roger L'Estrange, listed *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* as one of those fallacious works that claimed the King's power was fiduciary. L'Estrange's pamphlet was written for a purpose and gained its objective. It was entitled *Considerations and Proposals*, which, a long title declared, would prove the need of state-censorship. It was published in June of 1663. In August, L'Estrange was appointed government inquisitor of the press. Under him, a poor printer was prosecuted, who, in 1664, published excerpts from *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*. The man was hanged, drawn and quartered.

Certain it was that Milton's *De Doctrina Christiana*, with its strictures against the Church and other daring matter, could not now be published. In 1664, Parliament enacted the Conven-

ticle Act. It required all persons to attend the Established Church on pain of banishment. Punishments to the extremity of death were indicated for those attending services not in accord with Church of England ritual. Milton had entered the Church, perforce, for his third marriage. He had no intention of entering it for a purpose less momentous. In September of 1664, the Calendar of State Papers records that he was arraigned with others for violating the Conventicle Act.⁷ One may be sure that no expedient forced Milton into the Established Church. He preferred communion through the medium of *Paradise Lost*.

A reprieve for nonconformists had to be granted in London at the time of the Great Plague. From April to October of 1665, the City offered spectacles more dreadful than Milton could conceive of for his fallen angels. The number of the dead mounted to 26,230 for the month of September. Bodies were collected in carts at night and carried to a great pit in Bunhill Fields. The carts rattled over Artillery Walk and a dreadful crier called to those within their houses to bring out their dead.

Thomas Ellwood found for Milton a pleasant refuge not far from London in Chalfont St. Giles. Its garden and the nightingales, and glimpses of the Chiltern Hills through lozenges of latticed windows suggested earlier days at Horton. Ellwood visited him and had the signal honor of receiving the manuscript of *Paradise Lost*, which he was told to read and judge at leisure. His narrative of the episode omits his judgment,—which, indeed, is no great loss. He claims that he suggested that Milton pursue his subject further and write of *Paradise Found*.

In February or March of 1666, Milton returned to his home in Artillery Walk. A wall was being built around the plague pit of Bunhill Fields that the place might become a burial ground for dissenters. Its proximity, perhaps, acted as a spur to Milton. There was much that remained to be done.

Before arrangements could be made for the publication of *Paradise Lost*, London was visited by the Great Fire. It ravaged

four hundred and thirty-six square acres of the City, coming within a short distance of Milton's dwelling place. His old home in Bread Street was destroyed. Aubrey says that till this time, it had been much visited by foreigners. Pepys has described the scene about St. Paul's,—how all its roofs were fallen and the body of the choir into St. Faith's. The school that Milton had attended, the frescoes where he had looked upon the antic pageantry of death,—all these were now the talk of yesterday. The clustering shops and book-stalls that had beguiled the idlers and the curious were now destroyed. Book-sellers became bankrupt, having neither stock nor store.

The reduction of his own income was very great, since most of this had been derived from real estate. What efforts he made to find a publisher for his great epic and what time was consumed in the search, there is no means of knowing. Its author was suspect,—accounted a regicide and founder of Divorcers, known for traitorous Latin and vituperative English, not for poesy. The strange narrative he offered was suspect also. It lacked rhyme. It held no praise, implicit or avowed, for the House of Stuart. It was totally dissimilar in subject and in treatment to the verses of the courtier poets of Charles.

Late in April of 1667, a small publisher, Samuel Simmons, signed with Milton a contract for publication. The poet received for *Paradise Lost* £5, amounting, roughly, to \$85, and the promise of £5 more after the sale of 1,300 copies. The same amount was to be paid after the sale of a second and a third impression,—each of them not to exceed fifteen hundred. In the contingency of further editions, all profits were to accrue to Simmons. The authorization of an imprimatur was necessary. The Reverend Thomas Tomkyns, chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, was asked to pass upon the volume. He was under thirty, a former Fellow of All Souls and Proctor. He had written a pamphlet, *The Inconveniences of Toleration*, and he had subjected a certain number of words to the harness of rhyme and

rhythm. Also, he had officiated at the marriage of Milton and Elizabeth Minshull at a time when a mere civil service was no longer permissible. He was younger than Milton, greatly his inferior in judgment. The humiliation of submitting to such authority had been foreseen and expressed with passion in the *Areopagitica*.

The Reverend Tomkyns was somewhat dismayed lest the poet's lines should hold a double meaning. He mooned over their import, but decided finally not to shut them from the public view:

As when the Sun, new ris'n
Looks through the Horizontal misty Air
Shorn of his Beams, or from behind the Moon
In dim Eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
On half the Nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs.

Certainly, the fear of change perplexed King Charles. Would he be angered that his servant, Thomas Tomkyns, chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, had permitted unaltered publication?

On August 20, 1667, *Paradise Lost* was enrolled upon the Stationers' Register, as entered under the hands of Thomas Tomkyns and of Warden Royston, once the publisher of *Eikōn Basilikē*. Simmons' name did not appear upon the first edition. For the safeguarding of his reputation, he had employed Peter Parker to print and sell the book, but had arranged for good type and good paper,—matter more important than use of the name of Samuel Simmons.⁸

In the fall, the book was launched amid the pleasure skiffs of Caroline poets and Restoration dramatists. It held no overt reference to the years when Milton served as Latin Secretary, yet it recalled, somehow, the early days when Oliver had led the Independents and they had been proud of his great leader-

ship. Dunkirk had been sold by Charles II. It had become chief fortress for defense of France. In June of 1667, Admiral Ruyter sailed his Dutch fleet up the Medway, firing English ships and destroying the fortress of Sheerness. For a time, London itself was fearful under his blockade.

A French traveler, Sorbières, marveled that in a few years after the hysterical welcome of Charles II, Englishmen became fond of reverting to past glories. They allowed their fancy to carry them back to the time

When Oliver was there and their fleets were so powerful, and they won glory on all the seas, and all the earth wanted their alliance, and the Republic flourished and received ambassadors from all countries.⁹

And Samuel Pepys, who felt the pulse of the time with a light, sure hand, entered in his diary of 1667 a like opinion:

It is strange how everybody do nowadays reflect upon Oliver and commend him, what brave things he did, and made all the neighbour princes fear him.

It was no single line nor group of lines that Milton's censor, Thomas Tomkyns, should have feared. It was the poem in its entirety,—its zeal for religion, its striving for perfection, the invocation of its genius to the strength of England,—a strength that would presage future more glorious than could be gained under subjection to King Charles. The very rhythm of the poem, not ornament, not artifice, but entering into the essence of the thought itself,—the very rhythm boded danger. It had the force of inevitability and this an arbitrary ruler does not wish to take into account. Milton's rhythm is the rhythm that the moon imposes on the sea, the rhythm of a wind that beats against a mountain crag, the rhythm of the breathing of a strong man who grapples with an adversary. It is the rhythm of nature itself that obeys a law so subtle and so simple that no man, not even

a great poet, can consciously phrase thoughts to its conformity.

There were men in England who hungered for titanic phrase and universal thought. It was for these that Milton wrote, trusting no more the judgment of the mob in literature than he had trusted it in politics. The men of true minds found his work, and Samuel Simmons, who had started at a shadow, no longer feared to place his name with Milton's on the title page. In the year 1668, it was considered unusual that a first edition should be exhausted in eighteen months. By such achievement, Oliver's Secretary came now to be considered as a poet.

CHAPTER XX

STATESMAN IMPARADIS'D

WHAT part the Latin Secretary played in the creation of *Paradise Lost*¹ deserves some study. Oliver and the Republicans had been better served because the Secretary had been a poet at Horton and in Italy, seeking the shrines of beauty, hating lustily all bonds that prisoned liberty in home and church and state,—avid and sanguine for attainment of perfection. *Paradise Lost* was the better because its author pulsed with the blood of a young poet, immured some twenty years within the active politician. If duties of office and vicissitudes of state had delayed the finishing of the work, they had insured a completion that otherwise would have been impossible.

Milton had heard the arguments in Council. He knew the speech of ambassadors. The writing of hundreds of dispatches to emissaries, who served their state abroad, had given sentience of vast design. The vigorous rivalries of generals, the corruption of noblest intentions through ambition had whetted his conception of struggle between good and evil. His misfortunes,—blindness and loss of power, filial neglect and disobedience, death of friends and shameless executions, the loneliness of genius, could be the better borne in his retirement because he had fibered and strengthened his will by active service. He had seen how slight a thing and how restricted was human power, how transitory the bauble that men called success. An inner radiance gave to judgment wisdom, and burned away all bitterness against the individual wrong. It flared into a stronger flame of hatred against evil.

For Milton's ideas on trifold liberty, there was necessary a

jeweled reliquary that they might be preserved for time to come. He committed them to *Paradise Lost*. There they could lie until they could be rightly used. Age would not take from them their sovereign power for working miracles. The narrative by which he conveyed his meaning and the verse by which it was expressed must both have permanence. How came we here and why? were queries that would go sounding through the ages. What is good and how may man attain it? If there is an omnipotent God, how, then, came evil to the world? These questions, too, were deathless. Milton strove to answer by interpretation of the Book of Genesis. For many years he had quoted Scripture to point his arguments in politics. He would use it now to convey those conceptions of his own which seemed to merit immortality.

As to form of verse, he determined to eschew the perfumed fashions of a day that tinkled rhyme with rhyme. The primer rules of poetry were not for him. By larger rules that took account of pause and stress and rich sonority in ways beyond a lesser poet, Milton attained an ample, ordered liberty. His thoughts craved freedom, but they were majestic, beautiful, sequential. They were worthy meter of Marlowe's and of Shakespeare's choosing. It was the iambic pentameter that he adopted. The words he used were the minted treasure of studies he had made in many tongues. Sometimes when English failed, he coined from Greek or Latin. But he valued most the strength of native monosyllables. Always his rich learning was made to serve his purpose,—to give staple currency to thoughts worthy of transmission, worthy of survival.

The measure of his poem was heroic; its diction glamorous. What success he should have depended largely on his conception of the Deity. A man's god is the measure of himself—plus a groping into the void that brings back nothing and yet is nobler than the concrete vision. Milton's God reaches to a timelessness, an eternity, that only one destined for immortality could have suggested. His divinity has a radiance proceeding from within

and not depending on any outward pomp of circumstance or the reflected glory of works of his creation. It is a rare radiance, bought at the expense of Milton's vision, an inner power attained by Milton's own defeat. His God is omniscient and yet has not the wisdom that concerns itself with trivia. Perhaps to a scientist, the small space known as Eden would seem unimportant in conception of the universe, but in Milton's conception its significance is universal and it is inevitable that God's interest should focus there. This is the God that had inspired Milton to be the champion of the English Republic, so that it might illumine with its high example the Christian world. God's greatest interest is the dominance of good through free desire,—the attainment by man of reasoned, active liberty. This, Milton had struggled for in England.

God being thus created, it is inevitable that Satan shall be unreasoned energy; and Christ, energy under the guide of reason. The God of the epic is the "Great Workmaster," the origin and motivator, rather than the Father. He is a companion only to his Son. For man there is necessary an intermediary. Irony is one of his high attributes,—a quality Milton had esteemed valuable for the discomfiture of his enemies. Gentleness and simplicity, mercy and love for the fallen might emanate from him but could not be of him. He might send to Man his only begotten Son, but He could not, Himself, wash the feet of beggars. Creator of man, He seems to lack humanity. There would be many who would prefer St. Francis of Assisi to the God of Milton. He is not a God to whom children would plead to come. Those might approach who had been disciplined to spiritual strength by struggle, learning and experience. They would not be jostled by the mob. This is no God for the democracy. Immutable as his eternal laws, he remains aloof, a challenge to the imagination of the great.

The man whom Restoration divines and pamphleteers denounced for his depravity described the good in grave, celestial

rhythm. He, who was believed to have been scorned, neglected and ignored, had been conversing, "lowly-wise," with God upon his purpose for this earth. He who had not ten more years to live partook of past and future and hoped with present speech to prove the seer and inspiration of his nation. In *Paradise Lost*, he sublimated the rôle of his creation during years of service to the Commonwealth.

For the setting of his story, he made free to adopt the pre-Copernican astronomy, although he did not scruple to refer to his Italian visit to Galileo. By extension of poetic license, Milton ignored scientific truth. The inclosure of his universe by a *primum mobile*, its careful gradation of spheres with earth as center, suggests the influence of Greek and Puritan. There is a compact unity to the scheme that would prove irksome to the mystic and the romanticist. Milton would permit his thoughts to wander from hell to heaven, but both of these he bounded and he plotted the route between. Earth, he grappled to heaven by a golden chain and erected, too, a stairway that could connect, or not, at will. To vast liberty, he applied the curb of mortal reason and placed a compass in the hands of God that he might circumscribe creation.

To be sure, chaos is introduced, but it is not the chaos that gives birth to dancing stars. It is the chaos of negation, a foil for luminous heaven. To Milton, chaos was fearful. He shuddered away from it, but hell was real. He was eager to frighten others by his vision. Until the days of our parents, religious conversions were many times a tribute to his success. The doctrines of Independents: predestination, free will and original sin, were strengthened by his eloquence, and God, himself, at times, was reduced to a theologian bent on the proving of a thesis.

This trick of Miltonic ventriloquism would seem a blasphemy were it not for the poet's conviction that the doctrines he furnished to the Lord were sound. Had there been less sermonizing, the poem would have been greater. Hunger for food, hun-

ger of man for woman, of woman for man, hunger for liberty, death, birth,—it is what Milton says of these that gives the epic vital strength.

Due to the surety of his beliefs, he was willing to expand Genesis and create a new continent to which to relegate those whom he most abhorred. The *Paradise of Fools* is Milton's unique contribution to the story of creation. Its dark and barren spaces, subject to the winds of chaos, he peoples with such fledgeling ministers as he had known at Cambridge and with such monks and friars as he had found degrading Italy.

Then might ye see
Cowles, Hoods and Habits with their wearers tost
And flutterd into Raggs, then Reliques, Beads,
Indulgences, Dispenses, Pardons, Bulls,
The sport of Winds.

This mockery alone is sufficient to explain the need that has been felt for placing *Paradise Lost* upon the Index. The *Paradise of Fools* is rather an addendum than a factor in the struggle between good and evil.

That there should be such struggle seemed to Milton divinely ordained and, according even to mortal ethics, justifiable. God foreknew all things, but his foreknowledge did not affect man's liberty to choose between the right and wrong. Man's liberty, although it might bring sorrow, was the most divine of his possessions. Through the first sin and subsequent struggle and suffering, man was given the opportunity to attain to a spirituality more pure than that he had enjoyed when fresh from God's creation.

Original sin was disobedience, caused, on Eve's part, through vain triviality, on Adam's through soft yielding to the wish for human companionship,—preference of guilty comradeship to virtuous isolation. Banishment from Eden, not loss of free will,

was the penalty for disobedience. In his own mind, however, Milton reconciles liberty with the direction of Providence:

The World was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence thir guide.

Furthermore, the liberty of winning to salvation through the use of the free will is further shaded by the gift of a Saviour. The Christ, who of His own will, determined to become man's Redeemer, was not the second member of the Trinity. He was of later creation and so was not coequal with the Father.

The dilemma of Milton is a dilemma that must always confront those who accept a god that is eternal and omnipotent. Man, who is necessarily man's prime concern, is dwarfed in stature. He is not permitted to fight unaided. Sympathy inevitably turns toward Satan, since he recognizes as insurmountable the odds against him and yet thinks never of surrender. He has fallen because he refused to recognize a delegated authority. He struggles for supremacy, not the subjection of self to divine law, but divine law's overthrow. His is conflict more dramatic than that of pale Adam and yielding Eve.

Himself a rebel and a very thorough one, Milton cannot fail to show appreciation of Satan. He furnishes him with the magnificent address to the sun, endows him with a conscience and even supplies a plausible argument for the seduction of our first parents. Shall they be kept from knowledge? Is not he who gives them to eat of the sentient fruit a Promethean benefactor rather than an enemy? One can be sure that some of Satan's speeches could have come as sincerely from Milton's lips. He could have described himself, perhaps at a slight concession to vanity, as

One who brings
A mind not to be chang'd by Place or Time
The mind is its own place, and in it self

Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.
What matters where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be?

And, again, Satan's estimate of submission is Milton's own:

Ease would recant
Vows made in pain, as violent and void,
For never can true reconciliation grow
Where wounds of deadly hate have pierc'd so deep.

Certain it is that if God is going to defeat Satan utterly, he will have to defeat an admixture of good with the evil, and so negative, to a corresponding extent, his divine plan.

For Milton, the effort to attain consistency as a theologian is of especial difficulty. He is English and he is Hebraic and Hellenic. In his pamphlets, he had recognized the artificiality of national boundaries and the fellowship of true spirits wherever found. He recognized, also, the fellowship of the gods. For Milton the gods did not die, and their survival increased his own vitality. The gods of legend and of myth, the graces, the hours in dance had blessed his poems in youth. In *Paradise Lost*, ungraciously he relegates many to the ranks of Satan's cohorts. There they prove their strength against the phalanxed angels,—creatures better dowered with wings than brains.

For the celestial host, Michael and Gabriel retrieve, somewhat, the balance of intelligence. They teach the discipline and development of the spirit, rather through reverence and submission, than by sturdy exercise of mind. Liberty for scientific search is granted, but its use not recommended. The visit to Galileo, it seems, had been useful only for similes.

By force of his genius and his adoption of biblical myth, his non-scientific attitude had a retarding influence. The evolutionists of the nineteenth century found that the conception of creation that was most general and tenacious derived from

Milton. It is the glorification of a static quality that weakens Milton's conception of the Deity. Milton's God is too ready to accept as final the beliefs of the Independents. He attempts to awe us, even to convert. The hypercritical are bored. They feel that it would be unmannerly even to argue with this poor God, who lived so long ago that he did not even understand the system of Copernicus; whose angels knew so little of modern warfare that they contended by shooting cannon of small caliber and hurling little hills. Such critics do not wonder that Milton's God felt anxiety when confronted by rebellious hosts. They see no particular cause for rejoicing when the conflict is decided by the Son, armed with lightning and riding in a car drawn by cherubim.

And yet this translation to Heaven of impedimenta of the earth is one of Milton's greatest strengths. It has in it nothing of inconsistency for, since matter is of God, Milton, in truth, rather restores it than translates. Men can vision all that he describes and yet, under the magic of his verse, admire the mundane as celestial.

It is not by the descriptions of God and of his angels that Milton most exalts his readers. They approach the sanctuary nearer when they listen to his prayers. His invocations to the heavenly muse that he calls Urania, the passages of self-dedication, the petitions of Adam and Eve, furnish the best of arguments against ritual and the tedious churchly repetitions that he superbly scorned. Most devoutly pure is the praise of God through nature worship. Early images stayed clear in Milton's mind because they had not been overlaid to obfuscation by images when the mind had lost freshness for their registering. The earth is beautiful, and heaven, too, in *Paradise Lost* because Milton saw very beautifully the landscape of his youth.

The divine rage that had animated *Lycidas* flamed out again when he contrasted the sanctity of paradisaal worship with pur-

chased service of the ministers. Michael, unfolding the tawdry pageantry of history, tells Adam that

Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous Wolves,
Who all the sacred mysteries of Heav'n
To their own vile advantage shall turne
Of lucre and ambition and the truth
With superstitions and traditions taint,

.
Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,
Places and titles, and with these to joine
Secular power, though feigning still to act
By spiritual, to themselves appropriating,
The Spirit of God, promised alike and giv'n
To all Beleevers; and by that pretense
Spiritual Laws by carnal power shall force
On every conscience; . . .

.
What will they then
But force the Spirit of Grace it self, and binde
His consort Libertie; What, but unbuild
His living Temples, built by Faith to stand,
Their own Faith; not anothers: for on Earth
Who against Faith and Conscience can be heard
Infallible? . . .

Truth shall retire
Bestruck with slanderous darts, and works of Faith
Rarely be found.

One wonders that the Reverend Thomas Tomkyns did not balk at this! Indeed, through all the epic proof is eloquent that Milton championed still the liberty of worship.

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Nor did he value less the sensuous, frank enjoyment of the marriage rites. Eve is portrayed with such exquisite care that one might fancy her the ideal woman Milton never found. And

yet the description is so vivid as to suggest mirrored reality. Some find embedded in the epic the sonnets Milton never wrote to Mary Powell and some find fragrant memories of Leonora. All men must envy Adam. Eve is of ivory and gold, so lovely-fair that there is difficulty in persuading her to leave her own reflection in the waters of a lake. Her swelling breast, the flowing gold of her loose hair have all the alchemy of youth. One cannot fancy she is destined to be mother of earth's teeming millions. No *mater dolorosa*, she is that miracle, the mistress who loves only one, and one for life. She coquets. She would have Adam instruct her. She would know why the stars shine when there are none to see them. She subtly flatters,—admits her body to be more beautiful than Adam's, but avows he is her guide and head. God is his law, but he is hers. She is not ignorant of the lure of sweet reluctance and of amorous delay. And, strangely, she has had celestial instruction in love's deeper mysteries. The description of the two "imparadis'd in one another's arms" is very sensuous. They retire,

Nor turn'd, I weene
Adam from his fair Spouse, nor Eve, the rites
Mysterious of connubial love refus'd:

These, lulld by Nightingales, imbracing slept,
And on their naked limbs the flourie roof
Showerd roses, which the Morn repair'd.

Milton hastens to append an assertion that God has declared these acts pure and, for some, commended them. Enchanting forms of dalliance beseem "fair couple link'd in happy nuptial league." As reassurance for blood-heating passages, there is Milton's splendid invocation to wedded love.

Haile wedded Love, mysterious Law, true source
Of human offspring, sole proprietie
In Paradise of all things common else.

Marriage he esteems not unbefitting holiest places. Cupid is not one of the gods he banishes to rebel host:

Here Love his golden shafts emploies, here lights
His constant Lamp, and waves his purple wings,
Reigns here and revels.

Milton draws the converse. Love is not in the bought smiles of harlots.

Joyless, unendear'd,
Casual fruition, nor in Court Amours
Mixt Dance, or wanton Mask, or Midnight Ball,
Or Serenate, which the starv'd Lover sings
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.

And what is Milton's wedded love? In paradise, there is no ritual of marriage service, but God-given mating—"unfeigned union of mind"; in both, one soul; harmony, "more grateful than harmonious sound." It must be remembered that nowhere in prose is the conception of true marriage better conveyed than in Milton's tractates on divorce. The ardor of his wish for physical and spiritual union made him condemn all counterfeits. But perfect marriage made Paradise, before the fall, akin to Heaven, and Raphael, musing on the mutual happiness of man and woman, could wonder whether earth was but the shadow of heaven

And things therein
Each to other like, more then on earth is thought?

Sin came to Eden not through lust, although that followed rapidly, but through the failure of man and woman to remember their divinity. They break the law,—she, through triviality, he, through fear of loneliness; and then lust comes and woes innumerable from need for "strait conjunction." Eve has cour-

age. To prevent transmission of her sin, she proposes suicide or total abstinence of intercourse,—a further breaking of the laws of nature.

Milton cannot forbear seconding the age-old condemnation. He has Satan find Eve fair, fit love for gods and yet "the woman, opportune to all attempts." Adam, with hard won wisdom, declaims:

Thus it shall befall
Him who to worth in Women over trusting
Lets her will rule; restraint she will not brook.

The great fault seems to be that Eve lacks reverence for law. After the fall, she is counseled by God's Son to submit to the will of her husband. Only for sake of love will she obey. God, she must worship through Adam. If there shall come a twilight of the gods when thrones go tumbling,—even that of the great Jehovah of Milton's worshiping, perhaps Eve's single loyalty to love will have its due. Till then, let it be admitted that man must have within him more of the divine than Milton could endow his Adam with or Eve will still be reckless.

Milton of his own experience puts prophecy into the mouth of the husband. He foresees

Innumerable
Disturbances on Earth through femal snares,
And strait conjunction with this Sex; for either
He never shall find out fit Mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake,
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gaird
By a far worse, or, if she love, withheld
By Parents, or his happiest choice too late
Shall meet, alreadie link't and Wedlock bound
To a fell Adversarie, his hate or shame:
Which infinite calamitie shall cause
To Human life, and household peace confound.

One wonders whether it was the delightful Eve who beguiled the Reverend Thomas Tomkyns to pass those passages that warmly praise the liberties of wedded love.

There has been ridicule of the dialogues in Heaven where "God the Father turns a school-divine" and ridicule of the domestic scenes in Eden where there was "no fear lest dinner cool," where day very simply merged into night with no necessity for man's disrobing.² But the speeches and debates in Pandemonium come off unscathed. This is due to Milton's memories of moods, methods and aims and the debating prowess of Oliver's men of the Commonwealth.³ The diplomacy and fair speaking of Satan to his angels showed that the Secretary used more than his pen when he attended sessions of the Councils. Men who had striven to erect a perfect Commonwealth and through shortcomings failed, debated now as rebel angels. Watching Beelzebub, one thinks of Cromwell of the Protectorate:

With grave
Aspect he rose, and in his rising seem'd
A Pillar of State; deep on his Front engraven
Deliberation sat and public care;
And Princely counsel in his face yet shon,
Majestic, though in ruin; sage he stood
With Atalantean shoulders fit to bear
The weight of mightiest Monarchies: his look
Drew audience and attention still as Night
Or Summer's Noon-tide air.

Milton knew what speech to give the fallen Lucifer: "falsehood under saintly show, deep malice to conceal"; "necessity, the tyrant's plea,"

Who aspires must down as low
As high he soars.

Being a poet and so a rebel, he is not content merely to supply the arguments. Unconsciously, his sympathy adds eloquence. Mammon says of God and of his worship:

With what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive
Strict Laws impos'd, to celebrate his Throne
With warbl'd Hymns, and to his Godhead sing
Forc't Halleluiah's; while he Lordly sits
Our envied Sovran....

How wearisom
Eternity so spent in worship paid
To whom we hate! Let us....

...rather seek
Our own good from our selves, and from our own
Live to our selves, though in this vast recess,
Free, and to none accountable, preferring
Hard liberty before the easie yoke
Of servile Pomp. Our greatness will appeer
Then most conspicuous, when great things of small,
Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse
We can create, and in what place so 'ere
Thrive under evil.

The diversions of the fallen, their games and drills and philosophic conversation, display a friendly concord that makes them seem more reasonable than Milton's fellow countrymen. These demons are too fresh from Heaven to arouse pity. It was a quality that Milton rarely experienced save for himself and for those who suffered from such misfortunes as oppressed himself. For him it was a quality too passive. Even his splendid sonnet to the Vaudois is rather an invocation to vengeance than an elegy for martyrs. Milton does not see as Dante does in his *Inferno*. He thinks as in a dream. Not amazed by horror, he shames men with the peace that reigns in Hell:

Devil with Devil damn'd
Firm concord holds, men onely disagree
Of Creatures rational.

In one of the autobiographical passages, Milton declares he is loath to write of wars or of the jousts and feasts of chivalry, while patience and heroic martyrdom remain unsung. And yet he does describe the war of the angels, the armory of Heaven, artillery bombardment, mountains hurtled through the air. Theoretically the theme was repellent. Naturally it appealed to the vehemence of his mind. His ambition urged trial of a subject long cherished by the poets. In spite of the very sublime manner in which he limns it, the battle seems puerile. Milton was farther ahead of his time than he knew. He was not interested in war. It is his condemnation of it that today is applauded. In Eden it is prophesied that in troubled future

To overcome in Battle, and subdue
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
Man slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
Of human Glorie, and for Glorie done,
Of triumph, to be styl'd great Conquerors
Patrons of Mankind, Gods, and Sons of Gods—
Detroyers rightlier call'd, and Plagues of men.

Very clearly are seen the effects of war on conquerors and conquered: those,

Who having spilt much blood, and don much waste
Subduing Nations, and achievd thereby
Fame in the World, high titles, and rich prey,
Shall change thir course to pleasure, ease and sloth,
Surfet and lust, till wantonness and pride
Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in Peace.
The conquerd also, and enslav'd in War
Shall with thir freedom lost, all vertu loose
And fear of God.

Adam is aghast to learn that peace, with its abundance, corrupts as thoroughly as wasteful war. Gold grows in Hell. There Mammon on its soft and glittering foundation erects his schemes for rivaling the light of God. On earth, misuse of wealth will breed corruption. Michael prophesies most truly that

Earth shall bear
More then enough, that temperance may be tri'd:
So all shall turn degenerate, all deprav'd
Justice and Temperance, Truth and Faith forgot.

There was no need of wealth's fair seeming to adorn true worth and virtue. The pomp of war and peace were Milton's hate. There was rank in Heaven, obeisance and regard, but the criterion was virtue. In Paradise, Adam "in himself was all his state,"

More solemn then the tedious pomp that waits
On Princes, when thir rich Retinue long
Of Horses led, and Grooms besmeard with Gold,
Dazzles the crowd, and sets them all agape.

To one who was curious, Milton gave as a reason for his favoring the Republicans, the fact that "theirs was the most frugal government, for that the trappings of a monarchy might set up an ordinary Commonwealth."⁴ True majesty lay in right exercise of a free will. Milton had pondered over Hobbes's *Leviathan*.⁵ Its author, he admitted, was a man of great parts and a learned man, but he was diametrically opposed to the principles Hobbes advocated. To Hobbes, when once the leader has been chosen, the individual will must be subservient,—the man becomes a subject. To Milton, God himself rejected the prerogative of exacting obedience. The mighty rhythm of *Paradise Lost* answered the mighty prose of *The Leviathan*. The form of Milton's epic made it possible for him to give celestial authority to his opinions. God says of man:

I made him just and right
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.

.
Not free, what proof could they have givn sincere
Of true allegiance, constant Faith, or Love?

And of the fall:

They themselves decreed
Thir own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less prov'd certain, unforeknown.

If God permits rebellion of his subjects, no king can claim obedience. This is Milton's answer.

It was the scribe who should point the way to wisdom. The submission to God's will that came from wisdom was man's greatest good. Milton's present labor resembled that of Noah's:

Justice and temperance, Truth and Faith, forgot;
One Man except, the onely Son of light
In a dark Age, against example good,
Against allurements, custom and a World
Offended; fearless of reproach and scorn,
Or violence, hee of thir wicked wayes
Shall them admonish, and before them set
The paths of righteousness, how much more safe
And full of peace, denouncing wrauth to come
On thir impenitence; and shall returne
Of them derided, but of God observ'd
The one just Man alive.

The punishment of man's sin was the condition it created for himself. With the England he had striven to create, Milton contrasted the England of the Restoration. Michael's description of a disordered world seems such a description as the Latin Secretary would give of England:

True Libertie

Is lost, which alwayes with right Reason dwells
 Twinn'd, and so from her hath no diuidual being:
 Reason in man obscur'd, or not obeyd,
 Immediately inordinate desires
 And upstart Passions, catch the Government
 From Reason, and to servitude reduce
 Man, till then free. Therefore since hee permits
 Within himself unworthie Powers to reign
 Over free Reason, God, in Judgement just,
 Subjects him from without to violent Lords;
 Who oft as undeservedly enthrall
 His outward freedom: Tyrannie must be;
 Though to the Tyrant thereby no excuse.
 Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
 From vertue, which is reason, that no wrong,
 But Justice, and some fatal cause annex
 Deprives them of thir outward libertie,
 Thir inward lost.

A people will attain or descend to the government which it deserves. Unfortunately the word, statesman, connotes to the majority a gentleman with pin-striped trousers, high hat and morning coat. Incidentally, it may suggest one who works not for today, but for tomorrow or the morrow after. In the latter sense, Milton, though accoutred in unaccustomed singing robes, is a statesman. Realizing the immensity of the task of conditioning England for the boon of right government, he struggles towards this end with every gift of his endowment.

To say that he is a philosophic anarchist may prove even more disturbing to the reader, but if his proud spirit can be ticketed, perhaps that label will serve best. A nation of just and pious men would need no government, only the machinery of administration. Verbal law, also, would become a superfluity:

Law can discover sin, but not remove,

Law appears imperfet, and but giv'n
 With purpose to resign them, in full time
 Up to a better Cov'nant disciplin'd
 From shadowie Types to Truths, from Flesh to Spirit;
 From imposition of strict Laws to free
 Acceptance of large Grace.

So spake Michael, and Adam, lately come from sin and having
 seen the woes of fast succeeding ages, thus made answer:

Henceforth I learne that to obey is best,
 That suffering for Truths sake
 Is fortitude to highest victorie,
 And to the faithful Death the Gate of Life.

The light of Paradise has faded. Age is come. It is a twilight
 note, the epic closes on. The undulating rhythm is of a quiet
 sea. One senses power and confidence in work well done. The
 divine approval of Abdiel, after his conflict with the rebels, Mil-
 ton is conscious of deserving for himself:

Servant of God, well done, well hast thou fought
 The better fight, who single hast maintaind
 Against revolted multitudes the Cause
 Of Truth, in word mightier than they in Armes;
 And for the testimonie of Truth has born
 Universal reproach, far worse to beare
 Then violence: for this was all thy care
 To stand approv'd in sight of God.

Paradise Lost is the exaltation of the seeming lowly. Adam,
 naked, ignorant, unskilled, is made the center of the universe.
 God talks to him and sends, as guardians, Heaven's potent
 angels. And Adam dares to ask them of their loves.

More particularly, *Paradise Lost* is the exaltation of the retired Latin Secretary. What deed could most astound the Heavens? What best draw wonder from archangels and from cherubim. Not the creation of a world. A world had been created. Not the attainment of perfection. God was perfection. Only defiance, absolute and irrevocable, of Him who was omnipotent could give a second center to the Universe, could divert and dim the luminous processions that from the several points of vast elysium, in radiant rays, converged in God most high.

Milton, the discarded Secretary, shelved, superannuated, took for his theme revolt and dared to show why God permitted sin to come into the world, assumed the rôle of advocate of the Most High. Milton, quiescent under hateful government, sang Lucifer's adventure in ambition, sang Lucifer's great fall.

Milton, the clerk, to whom designs of state had been but sparingly revealed, walked now with Adam and heard the Angel Gabriel narrate creation,—how earth was made and why, how sun and moon and all the stars were hung that man might know when day and night began, when seasons ended, when to plant his corn. Blind Milton sang of light,—the light of Heaven, lucent, ordered, pervasive, as solar rays that bring fruition to the earth; the light of the Inferno,—jagged fire, gorgeous, jetting, unrestrained, flame that destroys.

Milton, befooled by his own daughters, strove to reconcile the freedom of the individual with universal law, giving to one a character as absolute as to the other. Milton, hesitant in movement, fettered by a poor, gout-ridden body, escaped to live with the celestials,—beings "all head, all eye, all ear, all intellect, all sense,"—spirits who could "limb themselves" as they might choose, assuming color, shape and size to please their wanton fancy. Milton, who had been berated by his enemies for cowardice, sang the great battles of the empyrean, when cannon first were used and mountains hurled at erring angels. Milton, cribb'd and cabin'd within city walls, freed his great soul by winging

through the vasty deep with Lucifer and clambering even to the throne of the High God, who, lonely, fills infinitude.

At the time that Milton received his £5 royalty, the magnificence of his epic had won for it champions against those critics who condemned its lack of rhyme and its free use of words known only to John Milton. In 1668, Simmons decided on a new edition. This, when published, bore his name and carried a prefatory note to explain the author's choice of verse. This matter, Simmons admitted, had "stumbled many," and so the author had agreed to explain "why the poem rhymed not."

Milton was well aware of the contrary poetic usage of John Dryden. Of lesser poets, he was contemptuous. It was against these, no doubt, that he petitioned his heavenly muse:

Drive farr off the barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus and his revellers, the Race
Of that wilde Rout that tore the Thracian Bard
In Rhodope, till the savage clamour dround
Both Harp and Voice.

The vehemence with which the poet condemned an age-old device, used often by himself and the sparse company of his great peers, suggests that he was much offended that the lack of rhyme had caused undue deflection of interest from his theme and purpose. Rhyme, he declares, is "no necessary adjunct or true ornament" of poem or verse in longer works. Rather, he thought it the invention of a barbarous age to set off wretched matter and lame meter. True, it had been used by famous modern poets, but more often it had crippled them than aided. It was trivial. Musical delight lay only in "apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables and the sense variously drawn out from one verse to another." There lingered in his memory the glory of Leonora's singing. He esteemed his discarding of rhyme in *Paradise Lost* as an example set, the first in English, of "ancient

liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming.”⁶

But if good wine needs no bush, truly good verse needs no apology, and Milton's statements, one is sure, are not a defense of his epic, but one more onslaught in his struggles for sweet liberty. It was the old song that he sang:

With mortal voice, unchang'd
To hoarse or mute, though fall'n on evil dayes,
On evil dayes though fall'n, and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compast round,
And solitude.

His epic made its way, whether or no. Edward Phillips, who had attended its slow growth, praised it in all parts and rejoiced that, by the suffrage of those qualified to judge, it was declared to have attained perfection.⁷ The Latin Secretary achieved fame as a poet in his own lifetime. Bishop Burnet has written that Milton was

much visited by strangers and much admired by all at home for the poems he writ, though he was then blind, chiefly *Paradise Lost*, in which there is a nobleness both of contrivance and execution, that though he affected to write in blank verse without rhyme, and made many new, rough words, yet it was esteemed the beautifullest and perfectest poem that ever was writ, at least in our language.⁸

As poet, the sometime Latin Secretary had reached a pinnacle so high that plaudits of his countrymen, once much desired, seemed far away, faintly inconsequential.

CHAPTER XXI

AGONISTES

THE earliest biographer says of Milton that

he rendered his studies and various works more easy and pleasant by allotting them their several portions of the day. Of these the time friendly to the muses fell to his poetry; and he waking early (as is the use of temperate men) had commonly a good stock of verses ready against his amanuensis come, which if it happened to be later than ordinary, he would complain, saying he wanted to be milked.

He was working in 1669 on *Paradise Regained*, the laud of One who aspired to highest leadership and attained to this through conquering temptation. When his mood was dulled, he turned to other work, corrected and amended a Latin grammar,¹ for those who, impatient of the methods of the schools, wished "to attain the Latin tongue with little teaching and their own industry."

He had among his papers a history of Muscovia and other less known countries lying eastward of Russia as far as Cathay.² Friends advised that his history be published. He set about preparing its pages for the press. It told of the voyage of Richard Chancellor and of Hugh Willoughby, who perished of cold in Lapland and so saw not the golden palace of Moscow, set "four square upon a hill." It told of a lake where "rubies and sapphires grew," of roaring whales and of cold Rose Island, where for some months there were roses, violets and rosemary. Milton noted that in Russia divorce was "upon utter dislike." This practice he approved of. The history is wistful with desire for

travel, so keenly appreciative of the marvels of Muscovy that Milton seems to taste the fair adventures of the voyagers and roll them on his tongue with zestful appetite.

The more that Milton strove to escape the house in Bunhill and his place in Restoration England, the more blatantly obtrusive was the present. His daughters quarreled with his wife. He told his brother, Christopher, that they were undutiful and unkind, careless of his blindness and made nothing of deserting him. He arranged that they should live apart. They were apprenticed at considerable expense to learn "some curious and ingenious sorts of manufacture that are proper for women to learn, particularly embroiderie in gold or silver."³

There were still attacks from the press. A clerical pamphlet in 1670 spoke of him as one who "missing preferment at the University had written on a new way of education," and being tormented with an ill-chosen wife had "set forth the Doctrine of Divorce to be truly evangelical."⁴ Such attacks Milton ignored, as he had often ignored them in times past.

When officers of state solicited his opinion on the Rosse divorce, he may have given it, but if so, privately. He had no wish to be drawn into a matter that might give precedent to the mooted divorce of Charles II from his barren Popish wife.

Many knocked at his door who had no other object than to see a blind man, who was different from his fellows. To them Milton could deny himself, but Aubrey says that also he was "visited much by the learned, more than he did desire." Retirement was the more precious to him because of years of service. He wished now to write as he pleased, to round into small circles work that had begun with larger scope and to conceive the new by commerce of memory with experience.

He had long projected a history of Britain.⁵ Now he had no wish to chronicle the decline that followed Cromwell's victories and the odious restoration of the Stuarts. Since an early conclu-

sion was necessary, it pleased him to bring his story to the Norman Conquest. The narration of that event would have been distasteful to one so English as John Milton. What was already written would serve to save for future poets those legends they might need for their imaginings. To some it would save tedious study of monkish chronicles and relate facts "with plain and lightsome brevity." There might come courage from reading of events more ample in their virtue than England now could dream of.

Alfred, Milton wrote of very tenderly. All might see that a good king could not be hated by the Latin Secretary. The valorous Boadicea, he dismissed as the distortion of a classical historian, who for variety pretended that in Britain women were men and men, women.

It was Milton's wish to present the truth naked, though "as lean as a plain journal." Actually, he selects and intrepets facts according to his taste. He tells of kings and warriors and wicked women. Nothing there is of the joys and struggles of ploughmen, merchants and shipbuilders, of those whose lives twined into the warp and woof of England so sturdily that it could bear the overlay of gold embroidery that was the court. He was content to take his facts from chronicles and, in their histories, the monks were often courtiers. Milton's style is stately but simple withal. He writes as would some recluse whose interest has been wholly of the past, some student toiling in chaste poverty and lusting after the crimes and glories of moldered kings and queens.

Only when he wrote of England on the departure of the Romans, did he "delay and interrupt the smooth course of history." The analogy between that time and the late interregnum turned the scholarly historian into a witness eager to recount to men of other days what he had seen. If England studied well her mistakes she might on a future occasion acquit herself more worthily:

For if it be a high point of wisdom in every private man, much more is it to a nation to know itself, rather than puffed up with vulgar flatteries and encomiums, for want of self knowledge, to enterprise rashly and to come off miserably in great undertakings.

Milton proposed through narrative of fact to prevent England from ever suffering again such burdens as the Long Parliament and the Westminster Assembly of Divines. The history was published in 1670 but the digression, the part most valuable, he committed to the hands of his friend, the Earl of Anglesey.⁶ There was not then a need to warn of a Parliament and an Assembly whose survivors were still the victims of the Restoration. But to the future, Milton handed down his accusation. The men of the Long Parliament had put their private ends before the public good. They had acted through spite and favor, formed factions and hatched treachery. To the people, they had delayed and then denied justice and had proven harsh oppressors. Lately come from warehouses and shops, there were members who still huckstered, though they sat in highest councils. Instead of repealing bad laws, they had concerned themselves with devising new impositions, taxes and excises. They had created unnecessary offices and unnecessarily increased the salaries of old ones. Those who truly served the Commonwealth had been levied on as roundly as were disaffected Royalists. Guilt-conscious, they fomented troubles so that they would be continued still in power, preferring rather the ruin of a whole nation than the presenting of accounts to their successors.

The record of the Assembly of Divines was no better. Its members had been summoned to reform abuses in the state religion. It had been expected that they would condemn pluralities and teach both priests and bishops that a single charge was rather too much than too little for the endeavors of one man. To accomplish reforms, they were paid by the state. They had not scrupled to accept their pay and then reach greedily for the very

pluralities that once they had denounced. They had, before they met in session, condemned civil compulsion in matters of religion. This, now, they eagerly solicited in their own interests. Than their defection, no greater harm had been done to faith and purity, no such cause for blasphemy given to religion's enemies since the first preaching of the Reformation.

The people, soon disillusioned by Parliament and by Assembly, became more cold and obdurate than under former governors. They turned to lewdness, some to atheism, some invented new religions, foully scandalous. And this was the greatest sin of the new governors: they had unfitted the people to receive and digest liberty.

For liberty hath a sharp and double edge, fit only to be handled by just and virtuous men; to bad and dissolute, it becomes a mischief unwieldy in their own hands.

So once again Britain had sunk, "entangled and oppressed with things too hard and generous above their strain and temper." Milton made an admission unusual for one so patriotic: the English were stronger at war than at peace. Civility, prudence, love of public good were outlandish. They should be imported into English minds from more southern lands, where "the sun ripens wits as well as fruits." England had need of lessening herself. She must remember the evil causes of disasters and "fear from like vices, without amendment, the revolution of like calamities."

By the example of history and by divine example, Milton labored to teach his countrymen self-government. The work of many nights and many early mornings was completed and licensed in July of 1670. Early the next year, it was in circulation: *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, although presented simultaneously and in a single volume, do not appear to have been written in the same period. The first, in no sense a sequel to *Paradise Lost*,⁷ is more akin to it in treatment and in

subject matter. It was probably written soon after the completion of the epic. The other, Milton's last poem, by its vigor seems to have had a larger period for maturing.

Paradise Regained portrays the triumph of reason over passion, presents the divine example of self-mastery,—the lesson which, over every other, was most needful. Milton does not exhort. He seeks submission by the creation of a reasoned beauty, flooding the senses with largesse that still should stimulate the mind. The tempo of the poem is more even, its architectonics more perfect than that of the epic. But the struggle of Christ's three-day temptation in the Wilderness has not the scope of the fall of the angels and the fall of man. Besides, redemption had been provisioned in the earlier poem. *Paradise Regained*, then, by its singleness of purpose,—the exaltation of dominion over self,—by its very unity, lacks something of the Gothic sweep and richness of its predecessors. Its music is more spiritual,—the organ music of a vast cathedral. Some strains there are that filter down through fluted columns; some follow tenderly the involutions of carved wood and stone and trace the broideries of altar cloths or leaden veins of richly colored windows. But all of them,—tones and overtones and even the light notes that lose themselves in shadows or whitely curl in cloudy incense smoke, are by celestial harmony so closely blended that finally they soar in unison to point the arches and to beckon to the sky. And all one's soul wings upward after them.

The poem adds little to what may be learned from *Paradise Lost* of Milton's political ideals. Again his contempt of the mob is shown:

What the people but a herd confus'd,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar, and well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise.
They praise and they admire they know not what;

And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
 And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
 To live upon thir tongues and be thir talk
 Of whom to be disprais'd were no small praise?

Among the temptations in Satan's armory, one of the subtlest is that of action before the time is ripe and the will is seasoned. Christ is bidden to

Behold the Kings of the Earth, how they oppress
 Thy chosen; to what hight thir pow'r unjust
 They have exalted, and behind them cast
 All fear of thee.

Satan commands

Arise and vindicate
 Thy Glory; free thy people from their yoke.

Christ remains unwilling to give his people liberty until they are ready to receive it. The mastery of earthly kingdoms, the lure of bodily comforts, of pomp and glory, Christ finds easy to refuse. These, for the multitude, with other lusts too mundane to be used for Christ's temptation, remain bonds to prevent attainment of true liberty. For their unloosing, Milton commends the influence of the Hebraic prophets. For these were

Men divinely taught, and better teaching
 The solid rules of Civil Government,
 In their majestic, unaffected stile
 Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
 In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
 What makes a Nation happy and keeps it so,
 What ruins kingdoms and lays Cities flat.

Milton's exaltation of himself goes farther in this work than in any other. With much daring but with slight sacrilege, he identifies himself with deity. He uses Christ's description of a

divine education and heaven-aspiring ambition to describe his own:

O, what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awakn'd in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting with my present state compar'd.
When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be publick good; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things: therefore, above my years,
The Law of God I read, and found it sweet,
Made it my whole delight....

... Yet this not all
To which my spirit aspir'd; victorious deeds
Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts....

... To subdue and quell o're all the earth,
Brute violence and proud Tyrannick pow'r,
Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd:
Yet held it more humane, more heavenly first
By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
And make perswasion do the work of fear.

The last lines have the retrospective quality of twilit age. It is Milton, not Jesus, who has spoken.

The search to justify the ways of God to Milton, and to appraise the author's glory as most sublime, contribute, rather to the poem's vitality than burden it with matter seemingly extraneous.

Milton assures himself of glory, not alone through confidence in genius, but through confidence in divine dispensation. Praise

of the mob, he despised. Such ceremonious praise as embassies might bring from foreign lands, he little valued:

What honour that,
But tedious wast of time, to sit and hear
So many hollow complements and lies,
Outlandish flatteries?

Job's fame is better known to Heaven than the false glory of belauded conquerors:

They err who count it glorious to subdue
By Conquest far and wide; to over-run
Large Countries, and in field great Battels win,
Great Cities by assault: what do these Worthies
But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
Peaceable Nations, neighbouring, or remote,
Made Captive, yet deserving freedom more
Than those thir Conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe'ere they rove,
And all the flourishing works of peace destroy,
Then swell with pride, and must be titl'd Gods,
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.
Till Conqueror Death discover them scarce men,
Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd,
Violent or shameful death their due reward.
But if there be in glory aught of good,
It may by means far different be attain'd,
Without ambition, war or violence;
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance....
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.
Who names not now with honour patient Job?

How well Milton could have written on Job's sufferings and how he pondered on his own is shown in another speech of Christ's:

What if he hath decreed that I shall first
Be try'd in humble state, and things adverse,
By tribulations, injuries, insults,
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
What I can suffer, how obey? Who best
Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first
Well hath obey'd.

Jesus declares, as Milton would, that he does not seek his own glory but rather God's and that he esteems true glory to have come when the Most High

Looking on the Earth with approbation marks
The just man.

And then there comes assurance of something God-given, but more mundane than silent approval from the Heavens:

So much bounty is in God, such grace
That who advance his glory, not thir own,
Them he himself to glory will advance.

All through his life, Milton had confided in the public with dignity but intimately. Not only had he expressed freely his views on education, church and state, but he had disclosed the details and sufferings of his life,—even to the unhappiness that followed hot upon the joy of his first marriage. Such confidence, Milton believed, was exacted of the people's leader. His life must be a true poem, irradiant, a pillar of fire to go before and to illumine.

When the labor of the heat of the day was done, he made confession still, evaluated, still aspired, still dared to shape his doctrines to experience and wishes. *Paradise Regained* seems the magnificent confession of a proud, priestless man, himself high priest and humbly confident of fellowship with God.

It is significant that as his thoughts turned inward more and more, it was the Bible, of all books that he had studied, that most he thought upon. It supplied the themes of his three greatest poems and marshaled still a phalanx of faithful texts to give authority to his beliefs.

The Restoration dramatists searched many obscure sources for their plots. They filled the theaters with bawdy comedies or sentimental tragedies on breaches of fidelity. They had no thought of borrowing the Bible from the church for the play-house. Milton, in his youth, had written masques in praise of chastity when the masque was anathema to Puritans because of its extravagance and the excuse it gave to courtly sin and folly. He published now, with *Paradise Regained*, a tragedy, the very antithesis of those applauded by the King, the Duke of York and all their lordly following. Tragedy, as anciently composed, Milton informed those who were disposed to listen, had been the "gravest, moralest and most profitable" of all poetic forms. He strove to restore it to its ancient glory,—to free it from admixture of comedy (concession to the groundlings) and to give back its unity of time and place and action. Tragedy, once again, should purify by arousing fear and pity through the imitation of man's emotions as displayed in action. Milton did not intend his drama for the stage. Truly, it could not have gained production.

Its hero was Samson, the appointed champion of his people, but in Milton's drama blind and captive among enemies.⁸ To his hero's name, Milton appended the title given to the contenders in Greek games and for the public welfare, "Agonistes." He was not unconscious of the reflected connotation the word gained from its derivative, agony. *Samson* was more than Samson. He was strengthened by identification with another champion, blind also, but conscious still of strength. Sometimes as Milton wrote of Samson, he thought of all the people of England as captive among outlandish enemies within their very

country. Romish practices, the Continental manners imported by a wandering court, French dress and etiquette, those who brought these to England, surely, were not of England. The pillars of this Stuart state were not well founded. Milton believed they could be shaken, felt that they would fall. And this, by leave of licenser and help divine, he would suggest,

A Little onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on.

The catharsis furnished to the emotions by the play was of sovereign benefit to the author. In writing of Samson's doubts and sufferings, he gained the serenity that follows free confession. He gained a mental ease by the very denial that for him there could be ease:

None to the mind
From restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm
Of Hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone,
But rush upon me thronging, and present
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.

Why was my breeding order'd and prescrib'd
As of a person separate to God,
Design'd for great exploits; if I must dye
Betray'd, Captiv'd, and both my Eyes put out.
Made of my Enemies the scorn and gaze.

Knowing the final sacrifice reserved for Samson and conscious of the service of his own late years, Milton could afford briefly to dally with the idea that the unworthiness of the nation might free its champion from further service. Samson claims that he was no private,

But a person rais'd
With strength sufficient, and command from Heav'n
To free my Country; if their servile minds

Me, their Deliverer sent would not receive,
 But to thir Masters gave me up for nought
 Th' unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.

England, like other nations, had become corrupt and been by vices brought to servitude, preferring easy bondage to hard liberty. She did not recognize her saviour and heaped "ingratitude on worthiest deeds."

God's dealings were difficult to understand, not only towards his seers and prophets but towards all whom he had solemnly elected,

With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd
 To some great work.

In the noon of their glory, God turned from them, obscured their lives and cast them into deeper darkness than they had known before they felt his grace. Some were killed in war. Some led into captivity

Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,
 And condemnation of the ingrateful multitude.
 If these they scape, perhaps in poverty
 With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
 Painful diseases and deform'd
 In crude old age.

Milton's gouty fingers twitched to hold the pen and write of this. Like Samson, he had been led to mightiest deeds and like Samson had, "by appointment," provoked his country's enemies and with his friends had come upon misfortunes.

Now blind, disheartn'd, sham'd, dishonour'd, quell'd,
 To what can I be useful? wherein serve
 My Nation, and the work from Heav'n impos'd,
 But to sit idle on the household hearth,
 A burdenous drone; to visitants a gaze,

Or pitied object; . . .

till length of years

And sedentary numbness, craze my limbs
To a contemptible old age obscure.

.

Nature within me seems

In all her functions weary of her self;
My race of glory run, and race of shame,
And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

In the eyes of his contemporaries, Milton was serene. Through them, we see him clad in decent black or gray. He sits in a great chair or sometimes walks abroad, led by Millington, a dealer in old books, or by some other of his friends. Those who frequented his home remarked on his good cheer. He jested with his servant on the religious services the fellow attended. He was ironic, pronounced his R's very hard, etc. *Samson Agonistes* shows the habit of his mind and soul:

O worse then chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!
Light the prime work of God, to me is extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annull'd, which might in part my grief have eas'd,
Inferiour to the vilest now become
Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me:
They creep, yet see, I, dark in light expos'd
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse and wrong,
Within doors or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own;
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more then half.
O dark, dark, dark amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total Eclipse
Without all hope of day!

His poignant memories of light provoke still further speculation on the union of soul and body, spirit and matter. In *Para-*

dise Lost, he had said that matter proceeded from God and was still part of God. Milton muses:

Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the Soul,
She all in every part; why was the sight
To such a tender ball as th' eye confin'd
So obvious and so easie to be quench't,
And not, as feeling, through all parts diffus'd
That she might look at will through every pore?

What scoff of God was this that enemies could

Ask for this great Deliverer now, and find him
Eyeless, in Gaza, at the Mill, with slaves.

That part Dalila had in Samson's overthrow gave Milton customary gratification. He again was happy to use his genius to depict the hardships caused by treachery of women, their finished beauty and unfinished minds, and their self-love that left them loveless of all else. Samson and the chorus agree that wise men must avail themselves of their divine prerogative and wield despotic sway over these vexing children of Adam's rib.

That he withstood, though with constraint, the woman's renewed attempts, showed Samson, again, a worthy champion. He had as single combatant dueled armies. In captivity, his spirit still exults over boastful Harapha, champion of Gath.

Having stood God's tests, Samson regains his power. His final triumph is one of strength, with virtue as its mate:

Though blind of sight,
Despis'd and thought extinguish't quite,
With inward eye illuminated,
His fierie virtue rouz'd



From the collection of H. Clinton Baker, Esq.

JOHN MILTON, AETAT 62

From the Bayfordbury Portrait, probably by William Faithorne

From under ashes into sudden flame,

vigorous most

When most inactive deem'd.

There is much in the concluding verses of *Samson Agonistes* that makes it seem that Milton, having made, so long, confession to the world, now sings his requiem. To Samson, his great prototype, he gives such praise as he would have accorded to himself. The chorus, Manoah, all are made eloquent for the occasion. The messenger bears witness that Samson fell unwounded by his enemies. There is a chanted assurance that, though his body dies, his fame, like the phoenix, will survive ages of lives. Genius, study, action, unremitting labor had ensured eternity for suffering Milton. Manoah, Samson's father, says the words that Milton would have had friends say when he, himself, took leave:

Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
 Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
 Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,
 And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

God, to his faithful champion, had borne witness. Men of good will, who rightly viewed his life, would be purified by witness of his struggle and, "new acquist of true experience," might turn to their affairs with peace and consolation,

And calm of mind all passion spent.

This was the last of Milton's many, various verses. It is appropriate that the final line was not an elegy of self, not condemnation of his enemies, nor exposition of God's character. It is not weighty with erudition,—no climax to a mighty metaphor. It is serene and proud. It concludes an admonition to the people that

the last act of their leader, his death, may be of profit to their spirit. Great artist that he was, Milton preserved the classic formula. Euripides had often struck as farewell note, beneficence. Milton struck deeper to transmit a message to his countrymen. His drama, written during the period of the Restoration, is classic in form and classic in spirit, but fraught with the free speech that comes from true emotions,—an example of the beauty that inheres in reasoned liberty. *Samson Agonistes* is drama for all time.⁹

The days of Milton's poetry were over, but the poem that was his life went on.

CHAPTER XXII

TESTATOR

DURING his last years, Milton approached nearer to poverty than he had ever been before.¹ The losses that he suffered at the Restoration had been augmented by loss of London property through the great fire. He received no salary and the expense incident to the apprenticing of his daughters was a heavy one. He may have made something, in 1672, by publishing an *Artis Logicae*,² adjusted to the method of Peter Ramus, who had opposed the system of logic in which Milton had been drilled at Cambridge. A few pounds more may have come from a second edition of those minor poems which had been published in 1645. To the early volume, there were added, in 1673, the nonpolitical sonnets and the metrical translations that he had since completed.³

During the winter, he was visited in his house at Bunhill by John Dryden, Poet Laureate. The purpose of the interview was to gain permission to convert *Paradise Lost* into rhymed drama for presentation on the stage. Milton gave the great man leave to "tag" his verses,—decorate their ends with gewgaws such as the metal ornaments that men and women used to point the cords that laced their clothing. In April of 1674, the Poet Laureate had ready *The Fall of Angels and Man in Innocence*, an "heroick opera" that tagged Milton's verse and cut his epic into acts and scenes. Its divisions were prefaced with elaborate directions calling for a chaos, a lake of brimstone or rolling fire, disappearing angels and other supernal paraphernalia. Eve's part was a coy one, which some compeer of Nell Gwynne's might have relished for the displaying of her charms.

The cinematic title and the other enormities were a severe provocation to John Milton. There was no compensation in the fact that Dryden publicly praised *Paradise Lost* as one of the greatest, most noble and sublime poems "that England had produced." His very active revisions shouted down his words. Fortunately, a new edition of the epic was needed. Milton received five pounds from his publisher and had the gratification of deriding in his preface the addition of Restoration rhymes and scene shiftings to the story of creation.

It was not only as a poet that Milton spent his latest years. He remained the politician. Late in 1673, he was reminded of his old struggle by the bequest of a hundred pounds to "Mr. John Milton, who wrote against Salmasius."⁴ There were Royalists that scoffed that Milton was so poor that, were it possible, he would summon back from the grave Salmasius to help him earn his bread by controversy. In a copy of *Eikonoklastes*, some one wrote at this time:

That thou escaped'st that vengeance which o'ertook,
Milton, thy regicides and thy own book
Was clemency in Charles beyond compare;
And yet thy doom doth prove more grievous far.
Old, sickly, poor, stark blind, thou writ'st for bread;
So for to live thoud'st call Salmasius from the dead.

But, truly, there was enough for controversy without benefit of Salmasius. In 1672 and 1673, Andrew Marvell was engaged in pamphlet duel with the Archdeacon of Canterbury. This was enlivened by attacks on Milton. The Archdeacon believed that Milton had collaborated with Marvell in writing *The Rehearsal* and so, although he had many times visited the house in Bunhill, he turned on his former host with savagery. It is significant that Marvell in defense makes no mention of the great poems Milton had so recently completed. He praises him for "learning and sharpness of wit" and excuses him as having had the

misfortune in a "tumultuous time to have been tossed on the wrong side and written, *flagrante bello*, certain dangerous treatises." These he had expiated, Marvell says, by a "retired silence."⁵

A young London actor, late of Oxford, joined the fray. In *Transposer Rehearsed*, he ridiculed Milton as a schoolmaster and as a stallion. Identification with such diverse organisms roused Milton's ire. Edward Phillips, his nephew, says that the poet made ready for the press an answer to "some little scribing quack in London." Because of the dissuasion of his friends or his own good judgment, this was withheld.

It left the honor of latest publication during Milton's lifetime to a religious tract on an old theme. In 1672, Charles, by royal authority, had practically granted freedom of worship by suspending the penal statutes against nonconformists. His subjects felt that the action had been dictated by Louis XIV for the benefit of the Roman Catholics. They feared this was a long step on the road that led to Rome. There was discussion, condemnation, threats. A year after this dubious use of the prerogative, Parliament compelled the monarch to revoke his act and make apologies.

Before the controversy terminated, Milton forsook the "retired silence" that Marvell had commended. The tract that he published was *Of True Religion, Heresy, Schism and Toleration*.⁶ Milton had no distaste for toleration, *per se*. As an individualist, he advocated it. He did not, himself, attend religious services, nor did he conduct them in his home.⁷ For such as could attend "with full satisfaction of conscience," he believed there was participation in the blessing God bestowed on churches. He considered the time inexpedient for an attack upon the Established Church. Indeed, the danger of his country's reverting to Catholicism made him regard the Church as a welcome bulwark. Heresy, Milton defined as the wilful adoption of opinions that were either anti-scriptural or not founded on scriptural precept. The Roman

Catholics, he denounced as heretical in the highest degree. Popery seemed a double thing that attempted to usurp both ecclesiastical and political power, and, when these were gained, to use them for mutual support. He recalled the many popish plots against England. The power of Rome was always contranational. For political reasons and for practices so heathenish as image worship, he wished to exclude Romanists from toleration. However, he would have permitted these with other heretics,—Mohammedans, Jews and atheists, were they foreigners in England, to practice their religion. It should be required that they keep their opinions to themselves.

For correction of heresy, he did not advocate fines and imprisonment unless the state, itself, were endangered. Reformation should be encouraged by right education. Milton held that bad men made bad doctrines. He was more convinced that good men make good doctrines than that good doctrines can make good men. England's corruption was alarming:

It is a general complaint that this nation of late years is grown more numerous and excessively vicious than heretofore; pride, luxury, drunkenness, whoredom, cursing, swearing, bold and open atheism everywhere abounding: where these grow, no wonder if popery also grows.

Its offer of salvation through pardons, dispensations, formal acts of penance was alluring. England must amend or she would incur "the heaviest of God's judgments,—popery." One can see that such a fear would make Milton tolerant of even the intolerance of the Test Acts.

He published his pamphlet without formality of license, though there was probably nothing in it the censor would have disapproved. Ostensibly, the King was still an Anglican. The controversy must have turned Milton's thoughts to his secret Latin work, his daring credo, safely hidden for posthumous instruction. *That* could not have gained a license. Its tenets, had they

been known, would have provided ammunition in good measure for his enemies. The work had occupied him for some time preceding the Restoration. It is probable that during his last years, he polished and amended. Matter so radical in nature, he must have wished to present with all the eloquence and scholarship at his command.

He worked also on the editing of his Latin dispatches of state, which the Dutch resident had persuaded him should be transcribed.⁸ These, he projected publishing with the *Familiar Epistles*. In early July of 1674, they were submitted together to the licenser. The policy of the Foreign Office was opposed to publication of letters of state⁹ and Milton's, especially, would have been dangerous. The stately Latin of Oliver's Secretary would have brought to the people a reminder of other days. The dispatches of the blind man, who lived in Bunhill, would have recalled a spacious period when, for a time, it seemed that England might assume the leadership of Christendom. Such memories, it were best to bury. The license was refused.

So be it! Milton withdrew the offending dispatches and substituted in their place some Latin exercises of his years at Cambridge. There would be a time later. He knew that even what was left unpublished would survive.

Late in the month, he received a visit from his brother. Christopher's loyalty to the Stuarts in due time was to be rewarded with a judgeship. He was now a Bencher of the Inner Temple. Perhaps, he talked of the Courts of Law, of recent statutes and enforcement. Milton's interests had been otherwise directed. One of his earliest biographers says that frequently the poet told those about him of his entire satisfaction that "he had constantly employed his strength and faculties in the defense of liberty and in a direct opposition to slavery."¹⁰

Christopher knew how true this was. Looking on his blind brother, he could fathom the secret of serenity. John Milton had won to that freedom which he accounted the greatest happiness

of life. It was a freedom that was dynamic: progress towards wisdom, abstinence, justice, bravery and magnanimity,—qualities, the essence of the true liberty. Christopher was not sure in all points of the political and the religious beliefs of his brother; knew better what things were to him odious. He knew, perhaps, Milton's greatest limitation,—an egotism that veiled his own shortcomings and exaggerated the faults of those from whom he suffered. Lack of it would have dangerously diminished the passion that inspired eloquence in controversy. It would have robbed him, perhaps, of that assurance that made him write as one God-sent, whose projects and beliefs were minted with divine approval.

Milton had thought many times of what he now would say to Christopher. He could speak without the use of one unnecessary word:

Brother, the portion due to me from Mr. Powell, my former wife's father, I leave to the unkind children I had by her, but I have received no part of it; and my will and meaning is that they shall have no other benefit of my estate than the said portion and what I have besides done for them, they having been very undutiful to me. And all the residue of my estate I leave to the disposal of Elizabeth, my loving wife.

Many of his books, he had already sold, knowing that his wife had no need of them and could not be expected, herself, to dispose of them at profit.¹¹

On a Sunday, the eighth day of November, 1674, having suffered some time from a severe gout fever, he slept and died, so painlessly that those who were about him did not know that he had gone. They buried him in the parish of Cripplegate beside his father in the chancel of St. Giles. For the gratification of his wife and many friends who were communicants of the Church of England, the rites of that church were made use of. Edward Phillips has described the funeral as a "very decent

interment." The business was concluded by a notation in the parish register:

John Milton, gentleman. Consumption. Chancell, 12 Nov: 1674. 13

In later days the sanctity of the chancel was not sufficient to prevent the perpetration of shameful indignities on his body.¹²

He who had written two of the most beautiful of elegies received no elegy himself.¹³ Rather, when England's rulers seem to founder amid their difficulties or sink into a torpor through surfeit of prosperity, his combative spirit is summoned back by poets and dreamers to take the lead again.¹⁴ And colonies beyond the seas have sought his mighty aid to keep alive those principles which, to their thinking, the mother country in false strength neglects.¹⁵ Not only among the English speaking people has his great voice carried. On the Continent, leaders of revolutions planned for public good have many times acknowledged him as their familiar.¹⁶

Poets, if they be accounted classic, hand down their thoughts to future ages. And on plastic youth their ideas leave imprint. For a man when he comes of age goes into the senate and the market place and hears a babel of many jarring voices and his thoughts are often distant with his own concerns. But in unshaven youth, it is the poets who are his teachers and he renders them many times, not attention only, but devotion. And so the poets are still the makers.

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Long after Milton's wife had died, leaving of his bequest to her "two books of Paradise" and "Mr. Milton's pictures and coat of arms,"¹⁷ there was discovered another property, a Latin testament addressed by "John Milton, Englishman, to all the Churches of Christ and also to all everywhere professing the Christian faith." It was the work on which he had been deeply occupied from 1655 to 1660. *De Doctrina Christiana* was the statement of

his faith after a long evolution, speeded by controversy and matured by experience. It was no book for Puritans nor could it have gained a license in the England of the Restoration. Milton had entrusted it, together with copies of letters of state, to Daniel Skinner, one of his assistants. Two years after the poet's death, the material had been refused publication by Elzevir of Amsterdam. Young Skinner took it back with him to London.

Perhaps it was after a consultation in regard to the Latin dispatches that he left the packet in the Old State Paper Office at Whitehall. At any event, it was found there in 1823 by the Deputy Keeper of his Majesty's state papers. *De Doctrina Christiana* was committed to the Lord Bishop of Winchester for his translation. It was published by the command of George IV. There is irony in history.

The testimony of Milton's faith clarifies beliefs that are suggested in the great poems of his latest years. They are vested with authority by a panoply of texts. Underneath the folds of scriptural quotations, the beliefs are seen to be the individual's. The Bible, Milton held sacred as the work of divine inspiration. But its writers were long dead and he felt within himself, and overwhelmingly, the divinity of the man, Milton. This made it incumbent upon him to show that any disparity between the words of the one and the opinions of the other did not, as fact, exist. The necessity of reconciling God to man causes in *De Doctrina*, as in many of Milton's writings, such distortions of scriptural passages as, considered separately, seem diabolic.

The posthumous work excels his others, however, by a more Christian temper. It lacks all animosity. Milton is true to the assurance in the dedication. He writes "with a friendly and benignant feeling toward mankind."

To those interested in the evaluation of Milton's religious beliefs, *De Doctrina* reveals a forth-right denial of the doctrine of the Trinity and of the sanctity of Sabbath. It affirms belief in the indivisibility of body and spirit and in final judgment at Christ's

second coming. Those concerned with his politics are more curious as to the views the work contains on connection of Church and State, the contractual obligation of marriage and the conception of the good,—curious as to this last because it must inevitably influence political practice and precept.

His comprehensiveness in this respect was such as would at any time cause controversy. All creation came from God and so was still divine in essence. Matter, the efflux of God, was indestructible. In Milton's great poems, it had been admitted that Satan, while yet Lucifer, had begotten Sin, his daughter. She had found approval in Heaven. Milton went to the extreme of believing that evil thoughts could enter into the mind of God as well as that of man. Certainly, they could be conceived of by the Son. Were this not so, the long temptation in the Wilderness would have been an absurdity. The poems claim, also, that earth is like to Heaven and Heaven to earth, that the joys and loves of the angels are like unto man's. After describing the diversions of the Inferno, Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, rebukes man because on earth there is less of concord than among Satan's hosts.

Perplexing gradations and similarities make it apparent, even without study of his life, that Milton has not the traditional respect for the decalogue or for any other code of laws. Indeed, in *De Doctrina*, he affirms that the commandments have been abrogated by Christ's dispensation and superseded by a law of love. What is in conformity with the decalogue, but contrary to a man's faith, is in the individual case a sin and violation of the law:

For it is faith that justifies, not agreement with the decalogue; and that which justifies can alone render any work good.

The spirit that animates the act determines its ethical quality. This spirit should be founded on the individual conception of what is good and this, in turn, should be based on individual interpretation of the Scriptures. It is here that latitude uncon-

sciously is attained. For the Bible, written by so many hands and at so many times, is a repository of justifications for deeds of divers kinds. Milton, undoubtedly, believed that God's communication to himself was more direct. His use of the Bible is rather to add palpable authority to a message he has heard in secret. Milton truly accepts as guide only that which he had earlier described as the

Eternal Spirit, who can enrich all utterances and knowledge and sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases.

In certain men there was still an approximation of that happy state of Adam, who, when freshly formed after the image of his Maker, was endowed with righteousness and understanding of the law of nature.

Milton was one of these and so his obligation was to teach, but he was mortal and far removed from Paradise. He cautioned that his teachings should be tried and tested. Once more, he proclaimed in *De Doctrina* that man's duty was to the state and not to the tyrant who might rule over it. And yet it was the part of prudence to submit to tyrannical commands in lawful things. Public peace and individual safety should be imperiled by disobedience only if the royal commands were for unlawful actions.

And what was law? No human law was valid that lacked harmony with law of God. Divine, unwritten law was the law of nature, given originally to Adam and of which some echo still informed the hearts of men. Such written law as the Mosaic had yielded place, after Christ's dispensation, to the law of grace. Love of God and one's neighbor, "born of the spirit through faith," should dictate action and make unnecessary the law of codes. Should civil power exact an oath under compulsion, Milton believed it might be considered as not binding. To subscribe was a justifiable deception. Ethically, also, one might on due oc-

casion deceive madmen, children and the invalid. On enemies, too, certain deceptions might be practiced. Nor could Milton find, even in the Commandments that there was prohibition of falsehood not injurious to one's neighbor.

In time of war, a nation might legitimately use feints and stratagems, so long as her citizens did not accompany these with perjury or breach of faith. Although Milton, both in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, had expressed abhorrence of war and its effects, he could not by search of scripture find that the practice was forbidden. It was by wager of battle that England had succeeded in overthrowing Charles I and gaining opportunity for freedom,—an opportunity which, shamefully, she had let slip. From brevity of treatment, one would judge that Milton had difficulty in reconciling his individual aversion to war with his belief that sometimes it was necessary for good results.

He has more to say in regard to the policy of the state toward religion. The conditioning of religion was the province of God, not of the magistrate:

When an acquiescence in human opinions or an obedience to human authority in matters of religion is exacted in the name of either the Church or of the Christian magistrates from those who are themselves led individually by the Spirit of God, this is in effect to impose a yoke, not on man, but on the Holy Spirit itself.

The state must not dictate doctrine. Neither should it use its magistrates to enforce the commands of any church. Ecclesiastical power should extend only in limited degree over the members of a church. It should not, with the help of the State, impose tithes and stipendiary dues upon those outside its membership. Nor had man jurisdiction in prescribing observation of the Sabbath. Milton believed there was not even scriptural command for this. He condemned the Church for its effort to "limit Christian liberty by inventing an imaginary sin," and to burden human life with laws and prohibitions not imposed by the Gospel. The

Church might select the Seventh Day as one convenient for religious worship and exert its authority over its members, but this must be without civil assistance or ascription of divine authority.

Rigidity of time for worship was comparable to insistence on set forms and ritual. These Milton denounced. Purest prayer might be inaudible. No bonds should shackle man's effort to petition or to praise his Maker. For model, there was the Lord's prayer. This should not be dulled by repetition day by day. It was sacrilege to force men to attend a church to hear it.

In Milton's church, there was no alloy of state support nor state authority, no bonds of time nor ritual. Its membership was limited by no nation's barriers. He craved for it a universality rivaling that of the Church of Rome:

Seeing that the body of Christ is mystically one, it follows that the fellowship of his members must also be mystical, and not confined to place or time, insomuch as it is composed of individuals of widely separated countries and of all ages from the foundation of the world.

By its very nature, such a church could not be state supported or state ruled. All that the state could render it was liberty from interference.

Milton took from the church and gave to the magistrates the right of contracting the marriage bond between its citizens. Marriage was an institution not ordained solely for Christians. It existed everywhere by the "universal law of mankind." It was a civil compact imposing mutual and personal duties on husband and on wife. Its ends were "either the procreation of children or the relief and solace of life." Thus far Milton, though anticipating the theories of his own country, is in conformity with those of many Christian nations of today.

His doctrine of divorce was more radical. During his lifetime, England had for so long maintained an attitude of shocked surprise at this, that the attitude had ceased to cause discomfort. In

1825, when the doctrine was republished, it caused consternation among those who had elected to remember its author as the one great poet of the Puritans. *De Doctrina* showed that age had not withered Milton's scorn of an unlovely marriage. Nor did the long years of waiting in the files of the Old State Paper Office weaken the condemnation of his yellowed pages. The Lord Bishop of Winchester translated his words in this wise: God

has not made provision for unnatural and monstrous associations, pregnant only with dishonour, with misery, with hatred, and with calamity. It is not God who forms such unions, but violence or rashness, or error, or the influence of some evil genius. Why then should it be unlawful to deliver ourselves from so pressing an intestine evil?

As before, Milton saw greater reasons for divorce than the one the Church and law so emphasized:

The very cause that renders the pollution of the marriage-bed so heavy a calamity is that in its consequences it interrupts peace and affection; much more, therefore, must the perpetual interruption of peace and affection by mutual differences and unkindness be a sufficient reason for granting liberty of divorce.

When good-will, love, help, comfort and fidelity are shaken, marriage is dissolved. The law's decree does no more than register a fact accomplished. The plight of a divorced wife is far happier than that of one retained under the heavy yoke of marriage without love. As before, it is from the man's viewpoint this son of Adam argues. To prove his contentions, he rehearses former arguments and glosses them with passages from the Scriptures and writings of the Fathers.

It is surprising to find that one who so clearly sees the sorrow that follows on mismating, is so naïvely optimistic as to believe that man may well risk happiness by contracting many mar-

riages. Milton had wed three times but in due succession and with proper intervention of two deaths. In *De Doctrina*, he recommends procedure more rapid,—one that is still illicit in Christian countries. With somewhat conscious dignity, he contends for the legality of polygamy. It had been permitted to patriarchs and to saints. Were it illegal, the race of Jacob and God's chosen tribes were bastards. Milton did not believe that Christ's dispensation had abrogated a custom which so ripely fulfilled a law of love. His masculine dictum was that "every man should have his own wife to himself, not that he should have but one wife." To this, Milton made an exception against the privileges of bishops and elders. Too many feminine entanglements for these would distract attention from the church. For others, who should be accorded the liberty of plural marriage, he gives assurance that the relation man will bear to each of his wives will be no less perfect than if he had espoused one only. The husband will be still one flesh with each of them. It is cause for wonder that Milton never had his peace so shaken by jealousy that he was jarred to better understanding! He did see that there might be danger from excess of zeal. He refused to cite as support for his doctrine the case of the most famous exemplar of polygamy:

I say nothing of Solomon, not withstanding his wisdom, because he seems to have exceeded due bounds.

Milton must have experienced a secret and sedate amusement at the thought of the effect his testament would have when finally it was published. He knew it would preclude him from appropriation by any of the sects that might endure to become acquisitive of the mighty dead. He would be too far away to hear gibes of the successors of those who had berated the Divorcers. He would be very far away, where man's blame could not reach to him.

Yet to be free of consequences was not to be free of responsibility. This was no stately hoax, he left behind, but a true testimony of belief. For man would come to judgment,—his soul arising with his body to await the sentence of his God. Not for his own fate, did John Milton fear; for he had thought and suffered and striven to turn his thought and suffering to service for his God. But for those others, those entangled in domestic woes, oppressed by tyranny, searching beneath a welter of mad lies for true religion,—for these he felt the obligation of still further service.

He designed no solace for them. His bequest was courage to continue the struggle to which he had devoted all his life. The goal was far removed,—not easy of attainment. Through *De Doctrina*, there would come once again, and from the grave, Milton's great plea for liberty: Other than the study of the Christian religion, nothing could so effectually rescue the lives and minds of men from slavery and superstition. Of how much consequence, then, was there necessity of liberty in such momentous study,—

liberty of thinking and even writing respecting it, according to our individual faith and persuasion, . . . Without this liberty there is neither religion nor gospel—force alone prevails. . . . Without this liberty we are still enslaved . . . under the law of man, under a barbarous tyranny.

At the end of the great dedication, sounding with greater clarity after so long delay, there comes John Milton's parting exhortation,

Cultivate truth with brotherly love. . . . Neither adopt my sentiments nor reject them, unless every doubt has been removed from your belief. . . . Farewell.

APPENDIX

THE HISTORY OF KING-KILLERS

So far as known this is the first time a biographer of Milton has taken note of this history, the second edition of which was published in 1720. W. H. Hulme, who edited *The Earliest Lives of Milton* in the *Western Reserve University Bulletin* of August, 1924, includes Elijah Fenton's biography of 1725, but makes no mention of this one of earlier date. *The History of King-Killers* is a two volume, partisan tract in the collection of the Rt. Hon. Thos. Grenville, and is now in the British Museum. I quote from the entry in the General Catalogue under "History":

The History of King-Killers on the thirtieth of January commemorated. MS. notes and index by Sir W. Musgrave. London, 1719. 8°. Imperfect; wanting six last parts.

Volume I carries W. Musgrave's autograph. It deals with only those regicides whose birthdays occur between January and July and so does not contain Milton's life. It bears the following penciled note:

Tho the spirit and style, with which this author writes will not invite one to a very attentive perusal, yet his love of abuse has made him preserve some circumstances relative to the lives and actions of those who would otherwise have remained in oblivion and which are not met with in other authors.

The title of the notes for the first month is:

The History of King-Killers on the thirtieth of January commemorated in The Lives of thirty-one Fanatick Saints famous for Treason, Rebellion, etc., being one for every day in the month. To be continued throughout the year. Published for the Consolation of the Sanctified Tribe of Blood-thirsty Republicans; and for the information of true Christians, and sincere lovers of Monarchy. By one who heartily wishes the conversion of the former and the increase and prosperity of the latter. Printed and Sold by W. Boreham at the Angel in Pater-noster Row in 1719 (Price 1 s.)

Beginning with part III (the lives for March), S. Redmayne becomes the printer, but W. Boreham continues to sell the several parts. The title of the second edition, containing Milton's life is:

The History of King-Killers or the Fanatic Martyrology containing the Lives of 365 Hellish Saints of that Crew, infamous for Treason, Rebellion, Perjury, Rapine, Murder, etc., being one for every day in the year. Published for the Consolation of the Sanctified Tribe of Blood-Thirsty Republicans; and for the information of true Christians and Sincere Lovers of Monarchy. Anon.

Printed for S. Redmayne (2 vols.), London, 1720.

From internal evidence, it would seem that this is by the same author as is the earlier part.

I quote title and contents of the biography of Milton, published in 1720, as that appropriate to the date, Nov. 9, 1674.

"John Milton

Political, pernicious Rebel, Nov. 9th, was born in Broad Street in London on the 9th of September, 1608, being the son of John Milton, a scrivener in the same street, his mother's name Sarah, of the family of the Bradshaws. This John was educated in St. Paul's School, and thence at fifteen years of age sent to Christ's College, at Cambridge, where he would sit up till midnight at his study. By this his indefatigable labour he advanced in learning, writ several Poems, paraphrased some of David's Psalms and perform'd his collegiate and academical exercises. When he had taken the degree in arts, he left the University of his own accord, as his friends pretend, but others say he was expell'd for misdemeanours. Then retiring to his Father's House in the country he spent some time in turning over Latin and Greek Authors, and some time repairing to London, to be instructed in Mathematics and Music, in which last he improved so far as to be able to compose a song or lesson. After five years spent in this manner, his mother being dead, he travell'd into Italy in the year 1638. In his way he was at Paris, but not liking that place, he went to Geneva, perhaps to improve himself in Calvinistical notions of rebellion. Thence he proceeded to see all the chief cities of Italy and then return'd into England, having spent a year and three months in his travels. In London he settled in an house in St. Bride's Church-yard near Fleet Street, and the rebellion soon after breaking out, Milton sided with the faction, and being a man of parts was therefore more capable than another to do mischief, especially by his pen, as sufficiently appears by those things he publish'd. At first he was a presbyterian, and a most virulent opposer of Prelacy, the established Ecclesiastical Discipline and clergy. Soon after he set on foot and maintain'd very odd and un-Christian positions concerning Devorce, and then taking part with the Independents, he advanc'd in his anti-monarchial principles, a bitter enemy to King Charles the 1st, and at length arriv'd to that monstrous and unparallell'd height of profligate impudence, as in print to justify the most execrable murder of his rightful sovereign. For such good service he was made Latin Secretary to the

Parliament, and then became a Commonwealth man, a great hater of all that look'd toward a single person and a vile reproacher of the Universities, scholastical degrees, Decency and Uniformity in the Church. When Oliver Cromwell ascended the throne, he forgot all his Commonwealth principles, and aversions to a single person, for he only hated the Right and became Latin Secretary to that usurper, wherein he proved very serviceable to him.

It is to be here observ'd, being omitted above, that after his settlement when he return'd from his travels, he in a month's time courted, marry'd and brought home to his house in London, a wife from Forest hill in Oxfordshire, Mary, the daughter of Mr. Powel, a gentleman of that place. But she was very young and had been bred in a family of plenty and decent freedom, not liking her husband's morose and saving manner of life, soon after left him and went back into the country with her mother, and though he sent many pressing invitations, he could never prevail with her to return to him, till about four years after, when the garrison of Oxford was surrender'd, she of her own accord return'd and submitted to him, pleading, that her mother had been the chief promoter of her frowardness. Hereupon, he, resenting this usage, writ three books of Divorce, above mention'd, in hopes to have cast her off, but his un-Christian Notions happening not to take, they continu'd together till her death. So scandalous were his books that the fanatical Assembly of Divines, then sitting at Westminster, tho' he had oblig'd them by railing at Bishops and the Church of England, did not vouchsafe to answer him, but caus'd him to be summon'd before the House of Lords, who soon dismiss'd him, there being many perhaps among them that lik'd his doctrine. And this is the more probable for that after the Restoration of King Charles II, when the Divorce between the Lord Roos and the Lady Anne Pierpont, his wife was in agitation, this monster was consulted in that affair. Next he writ a book of education, and then took a large house to practice what he had writ, and there were some that sent their sons to him, doubtless such as were well-wishers to rebellion; but it lasted not long. His other writings are not to our purpose. We shall here therefore speak of such as are. When the Independents had got the King into their hands, and the Presbyterians in spite began to clamour against them, he then published a most infamous libel, call'd *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates; proving that it is lawful, etc., to call to account a Tyrant or King, and after due correction to depose and put him to death, etc.* London, 1649-50. Such an hellish author was this to assert in print the Right of Subjects to murder their Sovereigns. Having committed that murder on his person, he also endeavour'd to destroy that Prince's reputation, by writing another virulent Libel entituled *Iconoclastes*, being an answer to his Majesty's Book call'd *Eikon Basiliké*. Salmasius, a professor in Holland, having published a book call'd *Defensio Regia pro Carolo I, Rege Anglia*, in vindication of that murder'd monarch, Milton answered him in a most traitorous manner; but it pleas'd God to strike him blind before the work was finish'd, and as blind he was in his soul and body, for he never repented of all his villainies. This highly applauded Poet, and most infamous traitor, and on that account the more cry'd up by his wicked brethren, was suffer'd after the Restoration to dye undisturb'd in his House at Bun-hill near London of a fit of gout, on the 9th of Nov. 1674, and was bury'd with his father in St. Giles's Cripplegate.

This brief life, inaccurate in many details, is worthy of consideration as an early example of a political biography of Milton. In the Rev. J. Granger's *Biographical History of England*, printed for T. Davies in Russel St., 1775, Milton is written of under class VIII, "Gentlemen and Persons in Inferior Civil Employments," as well as under the sections on "Poets" and "Historians."

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The most complete bibliographies on Milton are *Reference Guide to Milton* by David Harrison Stevens, University of Chicago Press, 1931; and John Milton, *Topical Bibliography*, by E. N. S. Thompson, New Haven, 1916.

The Works of John Milton in eighteen volumes, now being edited by an Editorial Board, headed by Frank Allen Patterson, gives promise of superseding in value all previous editions. This edition has been followed for the major poems. This is a publication of the Columbia University Press, New York City.



FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

1. The author wishes to express gratitude for constant assistance received from the scholarly work of David Masson, *The Life of Milton*, London, 1859-1894. W. H. Hulme has edited *The Earliest Lives of Milton* in the *Western Reserve University Bulletin* of August, 1924. Among these lives is one by Elijah Fenton, which was published in 1725. The present author in the winter of 1929 discovered an earlier biography than this one. It is contained in *The History of King Killers*, of which the second edition, 1720, is in the British Museum. Search in the records of the Stationers Guild did not reveal the registering of an earlier edition. So far as known, the life of 1720 has not been mentioned by previous biographers. It appears as an appendix of the present volume.

2. The recently discovered, anonymous *Earliest Life of Milton* (included in Hulme's *Earliest Lives*) has interesting information about the father. See the family tree in W. Douglas Hamilton's *Original Papers Illustrative of the Life and Writings of John Milton*, J. B. Nichols and Sons, Westminster, 1859, p. 43; Joseph Hunter, *A Sheaf of Gleanings*, London, 1850.

3. Elijah Fenton, the biographer of 1725, says Milton's mother was Sarah Caston. The nephew, Edward Phillips, in his biography of 1694 (published by Longman, Hurst Rees, London, 1815, and by Hulme, *op. cit.*) says she was "Sarah of the family of Castons." Francis Peck (*New Memoirs of the Life and Political Works of Mr. John Milton*, London, 1740) wrote that she was a Houghton of Houghton Tower in Lancashire. He says this appears from the writing on the coat of arms of his mother that Milton left, with that of his father, to Elizabeth Minshull Milton: John Aubrey, F. R. S. (Mss. Aubr. 8 foll. 63-68, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) says she was a Bradshaw. This is the claim of Anthony à Wood in *Athenae Oxoniensis* and that of the biographer of *The History of King Killers*, 1720. It is accepted as authentic by W. Douglas Hamilton. Masson is non committal. Richard Garnett says Milton's mother was Sarah Jeffrey.

4. H. J. Todd, *Some Account of the Life and Writings of John Milton*, London, 1826, pp. 4, 5; Sigmund G. Spaeth, *Milton's Knowledge of Music*, Princeton, 1913; John Aubrey, Wm. Hayley (*The Life of Milton*, 1796) and Richard Garnett give information as to the musical ability of Milton's father.

5. Milton's was an age of music, see W. Chappell, *Old English Popular Music*, edited by H. E. Woodbridge, London, 1893.

6. Heinrich Mutschmann, *Milton und das Licht* (Halle, Niemeyer, 1920) makes of Milton an albino and a monster. Aubrey described his hair as "auburn," which Mutschmann claims in the Seventeenth Century meant white. The portraits do not bear out the amazing theory. James H. Hanford says (*The Youth of Milton, Samson Agonistes and Old Age*, Macmillan, 1925) that the German

approaches his subject equipped with all the paraphernalia of psycho-analysis, and is shipwrecked by a wild thesis concerning Milton's physical degeneracy.

7. Aubrey's notes (*Collections for the Life of Milton*) at first were slight, but he filled them in later by information from Milton's widow, his brother and his nephew, Edward Phillips. Aubrey's life is delightful,—pleasant, witty, familiar, but as conscientiously done as possible. His queries and corrections make the little work seem much alive.

CHAPTER II

1. John Peile, "Milton and his College," *Christ's College Magazine*, Milton Tercentenary Number, part II.

2. It is Aubrey who states that this whipping took place. His authority was probably Milton's brother. William Godwin, biographer of Edward and John Phillips, accepts the anecdote as true. The biography by Phillips ignores the incident. See the quotation from Blackburne in *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis*, London, 1780, pp. 238, 542. Dr. Johnson made much of this affair.

3. Thomas Keightley, *An Account of the Life, Opinions and Writings of John Milton*, London, 1855, p. 32.

4. This Milton wrote of the theatricals in his *Apology for Smectymnuus*, *The Prose Works of John Milton*, edited by J. A. St. John, John Bell and Sons, 1889, pp. 114, 115.

5. W. D. Hamilton, *Original Papers Illustrative of the Life and Writings of John Milton*, pp. 67-71.

6. *Apology for Smectymnuus*, St. John, *op. cit.*, vol. iii, p. 140.

7. Milton's opinions on the Church and its fledgling clergy and on university training appear in his epistle of July 2, 1628, to Alexander Gill, *Considerations Touching the Easiest Way*, etc., and *Tractate on Education* and in *Apology for Smectymnuus*.

8. Probably Milton's first exercise at Cambridge was to write upon the music of the spheres, Masson, vol. I, p. 211. For his wish to have a lady worthy of such music, see *An Apology for Smectymnuus*, St. John, *op. cit.*, pp. 116, 117.

9. So Milton wrote to some older friend in December of 1631 or the following January. The sonnet included in the letter is the one beginning:

How soon doth Time, the subtle thief of youth

Masson, vol. I, pp. 245, *et seq.*

10. As part of the requirements of those on whom the master's degree was to be conferred, it was necessary to write on some proposition. Milton's was "Art is more conducive to human happiness than ignorance." The passage quoted occurs in this.

11. Cambridge proudly preserves in Trinity College Library thirty ragged folio leaves of Milton's Ms. Here may be seen some of Milton's poems "in their ore." Charles Lamb examined them and was amazed at their crudities, interlinings and corrections. A facsimile has been printed by W. A. Wright.

See J. H. Hanford, "The Chronology of Milton's Private Studies," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, vol. XXXVI (1921), no. 2.

CHAPTER III

1. How extensive this business was appears from D. H. Stevens's *Milton Papers, Modern Philology Monographs*, University of Chicago Press, 1927.
2. J. H. Hanford, "Chronology of Milton's Private Studies." Milton's own account of his studies appears in *Defensio Secunda*.
3. S. L. Sotheby, *Ramblings in the Elucidation of the Milton Autograph*, pp. 52, 53.
4. A letter from Henry Lawes, regarding his passport, is in Milton's *Commonplace Book*, p. XVI. See, also Pearsall Smith's *Life and Letters of Henry Wotton*, p. 220.
5. Cf. John Fiske, *Essays Historical and Literary*, vol. II, "John Milton"; Leslie Stephens, *Studies of a Biographer*, vol. IV, "New Lights on Milton"; W. P. Trent, *John Milton*, pp. 126, 127.
6. Sotheby believes, however, that the contributions to the elegiac volume were not published under the supervision of the University, since, had they been so, a part of *Lycidas* would have been struck out. Sotheby, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

CHAPTER IV

1. An account of these courtesies is embedded in *Defensio Secunda*. Edward Phillips, also, tells of them, as does Milton's anonymous earliest biographers.
2. *I pensieri stretti et il viso sciolto*, or "Thoughts close, face frank."
3. *La Tina, Equivoci Rusticali di Antonio Malatesti caposte nella sua villa de Triano*. See S. B. Liljegren, *Studies in Milton*, Gleeup, Lund, 1918, p. 3. Liljegren denies that Milton met Galileo. To me, his argument is not conclusive.
4. Milton tells of his visits to the Academies in *The Reason of Church Government*, St. John, *Milton's Prose Works*, vol. II, pp. 477-479.
5. For Leonora, see Eugene Schuyler, *Italian Influence* (1901), "Milton's Leonora"; Sigmund Spaeth, *Milton's Knowledge of Music*, 130; Romain Rolland, *Musiciens d'autre fois*. Professor Liljegren corrects Masson's errors concerning her. Cowper's translations of Milton's poems to the lady induce an eagerness to read Italian.
6. Diodati was already dead. He had been buried in Blackfriars, August 27, 1638.
7. So says Anthony à Wood in *Athenae Oxoniensis*. Liljegren believes rather that Milton remained on friendly relations even with the Jesuits and that there was reciprocal forbearance in religious matters. He believes that Milton's spiritual kinship with Machiavelli made this easily possible. To my thinking, Machiavelli's greatest attraction for Milton lay in his love for ancient Rome.
8. Liljegren, *Studies in Milton*, p. 16. Cf. with Milton's own account in *Defensio Secunda*.
9. *Thomas Hobbes, English Works of, Behemoth*, vol. VI, p. 239; H. J. Todd, *Some Account of the Life and Writings of John Milton*, p. 28.
10. This album is one of the most prized possessions of the Treasure Room of

the Widener at Harvard. It contains about seventy autographs, among them that of Thomas Wentworth, Lord Strafford.

11. See *Defensio Secunda*, St. John, *op. cit.*, vol. VI, p. 289.

CHAPTER V

1. *Epitaphium Damonis*.

2. Milton's account of his return is found in *Defensio Secunda*.

3. Seven passages of the Ms. in Trinity College Library are filled with jottings of this period. *The Commonplace Book* was discovered by Mr. Alfred J. Harwood among the papers of Sir Frederick Graham of Netherby. The find was reported to the Royal Society, April 26, 1876. Subjects and notes are grouped under headings of Ethics, Economics, Matrimony, Politics, etc. The Index Politicus has thirty-six subdivisions, showing Milton's interest in the Republic, Taxation, Monarchy and Tyranny, etc. Four pages treat of Kings, three each of Tyrants and Monarchy. Matrimony, Divorce, Laws and Liberty each occupy two. About one hundred subjects are listed for future consideration. Of these, thirty-three have to do with British history, fifty-two relate to Old Testament stories and eight are chosen from the New Testament. The facsimile of the manuscript was printed by the Camden Society in 1876 and the pages have been reproduced in autotype for the Council of the Royal Society of Literature. See the introduction of A. W. Verity to his edition of P. L., Cambridge; Hanford, *The Youth of Milton*; Thomas Birch, *An Account of Milton's Life and Writing*, 1753, pp. 51-54. For the effect of Milton's classical education on his political entries, see G. P. Gooch and H. J. Laski, *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge, 1927, pp. 150, 151.

4. Under *Tyrannus* appears this problem: "Whether it be lawful to rise against a tyrant. Sir Thomas Smith prudently answers that the common people judge of the act according to the event and success, the learned according to the purpose of the doers."

In the *Commonplace Book*, Milton quotes about eighty authors, English, French, Latin, Greek and Italian. His entries are made in these languages.

5. The Record in the Exchequer lists among the inhabitants of Aldersgate Street in 1641, "John Milton, Gent., Jane Yates his servant."

6. This is Edward Phillips' phrasing.

7. The Widener has a remarkable collection of Taylor's pamphlets. In 1640, he published *Differing Worships or the Odds between Some Knights' Service and God's, etc.* His address to the reader states that he has already written "near seven score books."

8. Milton recounts the circumstances of his entering the fray in *Defensio Secunda*. See the account, also, in *The Earliest Life of Milton*. For a French estimate of Milton's political endeavors, see M. A. Geffroy, *Etude sur les pamphlets politique et religieux de Milton*, Paris, 1848, pp. 224, 225.

CHAPTER VI

1. *A Pedlar and a Romish Priest in a very hot discourse full of Mirth, Truth, Wit, Folly and Plain Dealing*, 1641.

2. Lord Acton mentions Milton in a letter to Gladstone as one of those who

disbelieved that "doctrine established freedom, and undid the work of orthodox Christianity,—they swept away that appalling edifice of intolerance, tyranny, cruelty, which believers in Christ built up to perpetuate their belief."

John Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. II, p. 60.

3. Milton's belief that the public had a right to knowledge of his personal life is responsible for the valuable autobiographic passages that enrich his pamphlets and *Paradise Lost*.

4. *The Reason of Church Government urg'd against Prelaty* by Mr. John Milton: In two Books: London, Printed by E. G. for John Rothwell and are to be sold at the Sunne in Paul's Churchyard, 1641. This is the first pamphlet Milton published over his signature.

5. Thomason noted on his copy of this pamphlet, "Against Mr. Milton." The Collection has twenty odd tracts, sermons, letters, etc., by Bishop Hall. George Thomason, bookseller at The Rose and Crown, St. Paul's Churchyard, kept copies of practically all the pamphlets, including newsbooks, published between 1641 and April 23, 1661. Every few days, he dated the pamphlets that had accumulated in the interim as of the date he had selected for such work or the true date of their appearance. Milton's great admirer, the benefactor of Harvard, Thomas Hollis, suggested the purchase of this collection by the state. In consequence, it was bought in 1762 for £300 by the Earl of Bute, by order of George III and presented to the British Museum. The tracts, etc., are bound in about two thousand volumes. They have been ably catalogued in two large volumes by G. K. Fortescue.

In view of Thomason's diligence and foresight, it is preferable to refer to the Collection by the name of the Seventeenth Century bookseller, rather than to refer to it as the "King's Collection."

6. This pamphlet of 219 pages is in the Wrenn Collection of the University of Texas.

7. An anonymous versifier tried to enliven it by rhyme in *Smectymnuus or the Club Divines*. See *Poems of affairs of State from 1640 to the year 1704*, London, 1716.

8. In 1642, there appeared *An Argument or Debate in Law of the Great Question concerning the Militia*, etc. It is signed J. M. and C. C. This J. M. uses one of Milton's arguments against submission to tyranny:

Reason will arm every man thus far, as to conclude that the cause and ground of his obedience, is his sovereign's protection and therefore if his sovereign withdraws the one he may deny the other.

The pamphlet proclaims the "privilege and freedom of Parliament as the best birthright and inheritance" of Englishmen. In conclusion, its collaborators say:

It is not only convenient, but necessary that the safety of the people, should be the most supreme law.

Its pages are worthily written, perhaps the work of some gentleman of the Inns of Court. H. J. Todd saw a copy of this in the collection of the Duke of Bridgewater in which the Second Earl of Bridgewater (the elder brother of *Comus*) had written the name of Milton as author. Another copy is in the Wrenn Collection of the University of Texas.

9. In January, 1642, Milton contributed generously to the fund raised for the benefit of the Protestants in Ireland. The preceding summer he had been listed in an Exchequer paper as one of those who had not paid the poll tax levied for the expense of the English and Scottish armies in the North.

10. This petition in pamphlet form is in the Wrenn Collection of the University of Texas.

11. Aubrey, Edward Phillips, and Anthony à Wood record Milton's prowess as a schoolmaster.

12. This is the figure given by Thomas Hollis in a Ms. note in the copy of *Eikonoklastes*, which he gave to Harvard, 1764, in the Birch edition of Milton's works.

13. Issue of Nov. 13, 1642.

CHAPTER VII

1. Diary entry of Anthony à Wood, June 29, 1661, *Athenae Oxonienses*, vol. I, "Life of Wood."

2. Falconer Madan, formerly Librarian of The Bodley, Oxford, lists this as the chief Royalist newspaper during the Civil War. It was edited the greater part of the time by Sir John Birkenhead, once Laud's amanuensis and after 1640 Fellow of All Soul's. At the Bodleian, I examined the files for 1643-1645. It is a dignified sheet, not vituperative in the scurrilous way of most Cavalier newspapers.

3. W. D. Hamilton, *Original Papers*, etc., p. 50.

4. This description is from the pass issued Powell by Col. Mainwaring, quoted in *Mercurius Aulicus*, Nov. 10, 1643:

John Powell, aged fifty years, greyhayr'd, quince-colour'd suit and sad colour'd coat, colour'd hat and little beard, ruddy complexion, deer-cloth belt, middle stature, round fac'd and full set.

5. The theory was first advanced by an anonymous writer in the *Athenaeum*. It is stated, also, by Mark Patteson (*Milton*, 1880) and by Sir Walter Raleigh (*Milton*, 1900), more recently by Denis Saurat (*Milton, Man and Thinker*, 1925). Milton's care for Adam in this particular is supposed by the above to have been based on his own sorry experience:

On she came
Led by her Heavenly Maker, though unseen;
And guided by his voice, nor uninformed
Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites.

John Aubrey thinks that the trouble came from Mary's being a Royalist.

6. Gardiner, S. R., *History of the Great Civil War*, vol. II, pp. 7, 8; Saurat, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-70; Tillyard, *Milton*, pp. 138-151; Geo. Saintsbury, *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. VI, chap. V.

7. John Taylor's *Mad Fashions, Odd Fashions, All out of Fashion or the Emblems of these Distracted Times*.

8. Axson, W. E. A., "Milton and the Liberty of the Press," *Milton Memorial Lectures*.

9. *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce Restored to the good of both Sexes, from the Bondage of Canon Law and other mistakes, to Christian Freedom*,

guided by the Rule of Charity; wherein also many places of Scripture have recovered their long-lost meaning: Seasonable to be now thought on in the Reformation intended.

10. Hyder Rollins, *Cavalier and Puritan*, N. Y., University Press, 1924, pp. 21, 22.

11. *The Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce. Written to Edward VI in his Second Book of the Kingdom of Christ. And now Englisht. Wherein a late Book restoring the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce is heer confirm'd and justify'd by the authoritie of Martin Bucer.*

12. This is accounted the first declaration in the English language of liberty and equality.

13. *The Glass of God's Providence towards his Faithful Ones. Held forth in a sermon preached to the two Houses of Parliament at Margaret's Westminster, August 13, 1644, being an extraordinary day of humiliation. Wherein is discovered the great failings that the best are liable unto, etc. The whole is applied to a more complete observation of our late Covenant, and particularly against the ungodly toleration pleaded for under pretence of Liberty of Conscience.*

On April 23, 1644, Richard Vines, a member of the Assembly of Divines, had preached a sermon before the Lord Mayor and aldermen of London, which seems to have been partially directed against Milton. The subject was "The Impostures of Seducing Teachers Discover'd":

They bait their hook with such baits as are proper to the fish they would catch . . . And what is that bait? . . . They promise them liberty . . . They despise dominion and speak evil of dignities . . . There are others that go about with liberty, too, and cry a liberty from the obligation of the moral law as a rule . . . There is yet another liberty which some will promise, and that is the liberty of sensual lusts and fleshly looseness . . . They wrest the Scripture, making it speak upon the wrack that which it never meant; partiality and affection to their own opinion is an ill medium to look through.

14. *An Answer to a Book entituled The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce or A Plea for Ladies and Gentlemen, and all other Married Women against Divorce, etc. Printed by G. M. for Wm. Lee at the Turk's Head in Fleet Street next to the Mitre Taverne.*

G. M. has a good deal of fun over Milton's "fit, conversing souls":

You talk much of "fit, conversing souls," whether you mean by mixture or otherwise, it matters not, the language is too sublime and evangelical for mortal creatures to comprehend it.

15. *On the Detraction which Followed on my Writing Certain Treatises.*

16. *Colasterion: A Reply to a nameless answer against the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce. Wherein the trivial author of that answer is discovered; the licenser conferred with, and the opinion which they traduce, defended.*

17. The tract was sufficiently popular to have reached its sixth edition by 1661.

18. *Collection of Loyal Songs*, vol. II, p. 280 (British Museum).

19. *A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time wherein the Tenets of the*

Principal Sects, especially of the Independents, are drawn together in one Map, 1645.

Baylic was a minister of Glasgow. In the Testimonies at the conclusion of his pamphlet, he includes a page of excerpts from *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*.

20. *These Tradesmen are Preachers in and about the City of London or A Discovery of the most dangerous and damnable tenets that have been spread within this few years: by many erroneous, heretical and mechanic spirits. By which the very foundation of Christian knowledge and practice is endeavour'd to be overturned.*

21. An anonymous and undated catalogue, "done into English for the Assembly of Divines." A copy is in the Bodleian.

22. *A Glass for the Times, etc. With a brief collection of the Errors of our Times and their Authors' names. Collected by T. C., a friend of Truth.* London, 1648.

23. See John Ashton, *Humour, Wit and Satire of the Seventeenth Century*, London, 1883, p. 253.

24. *The Electra of Sophocles*, translated by C. W., The Hague, 1649.

CHAPTER VIII

1. *Of Education: To Master Samuel Hartlib.* Thomason has noted on the copy in the British Museum, "By Mr. John Milton, June 5, 1644."

2. At Milton's Aldersgate Street house, his students studied Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Chaldee, Syriac and Italian.

3. Williams, *History of English Journalism*, p. 61.

4. *Areopagitica; A speech of Mr. John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicens'd Printing to the Parliament of England*, Nov. 24, 1644. The pamphlet does not bear the name of publisher or bookseller. Naturally, it was unlicensed. A treatise by Isocrates has a similar title.

5. Such teaching was completely new in England. See Geffroy, *Étude sur les pamphlets*, etc., p. 61.

6. In the Eighteenth Century, it found its way to the American Colonies many times, chiefly due to the efforts of Thos. Hollis. Macaulay's work in making English the language of the schools in India made possible familiarity there with this pamphlet.

7. The Tercentenary Newspaper Clippings emphasize this:

At the first sign of the stirring of a new life in Russia, translations of *Areopagitica* made their appearance, and hawkers sold them for a few kopeks to defy the censor in Nijni Novgorod. When a press was devised at Simla it was on the eternal reasonings of *Areopagitica* that Mr. Gokhale based his opinions.

Daily News, London, Dec. 9, 1908.

Mr. J. L. Paton, speaking at Whitefield's Tabernacle, London, on Milton's Tercentenary said next to the Bible itself the Russian peasant reads most of all Milton.

Primitive Methodist World, London, Dec. 10, 1908.

8. *Poems, Both English and Latin, composed at several times. Printed by his true Copies. The Songs were set in music by Mr. Henry Lawes, Gentleman of King's Chapell and one of His Majesty's Private Musics, etc.* Printed by Ruth Raworth for Humphrey Moseley.

This book is rare and highly prized. I examined a copy in the Guildhall. In a note on *Lycidas*, Milton calls attention to its prophecy of the ruin of the corrupted clergy, who at the time of the poem's composition were at their height.

9. Keightley, *An Account of the Life, Opinions and Writings of John Milton*, p. 41; Hamilton, *Original Papers*, etc., pp. 75-78.

10. Sir Egerton Brydges, *The Life of John Milton*, 1835.

11. The letter to Carlo Dati, dated April 21, 1647. This is in the New York Public Library. It consists of one Ms. page with thirteen lines written on the back.

12. Among the Milton relics in the Bodleian is the volume of Milton's political pamphlets with a table of contents in his own handwriting. This copy was given by the poet to Rouse.

13. The Commons *Journals* under date of Sept. 25, 1647, lists the names of citizens ordered to be indicted before the King's Bench for high treason, as having aided and abetted "the late Force upon the House of Parliament." Among those named is "John Milton, Junior." It seems improbable, however, that the poet was one of the mob that compelled Parliament to repeal the new militia ordinances. On October 1, the Houses declared their intention to prosecute only the leaders of the tumult. A member of the City's Trained Bands was named John Milton and may have been the one referred to.

14. See *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, Sept. 28-Oct. 6, 1657; and *Mercurius Britannicus*, *His Welcome to Hell with the Devil's blessing to Britannicus*.

CHAPTER IX

1. *A Glass for the Times: By which according to the Scriptures you may clearly behold the true ministers of Christ how far differing from false Teachers, with a brief collection of the Errors of our times, etc., collected by T. C., a friend of truth.*

2. *Mercurius Elencticus*, Oct. 4-11, 1648; *Mercurius Melancholicus*, Sept. 25-Oct. 2, 1648; *Mercurius Volpone*, Oct. 5-12, 1648.

3. Controversy as to the authorship of *Eikon Basiliké* continues. The book seems to have been in part the work of Dr. Gauden, a Royalist churchman, who was so hypocritical as to sit in the Westminster Assembly and subscribe to the Covenant. After the Restoration, he received the reward of the bishopric of Exeter. The book ran into 47 editions in one year and was the most influential of the Royalist pamphlets. It was translated into Latin and French at the Hague and widely circulated in Europe. Geo. Williamson (*Milton*, 1905) is one of those who accepts Almack's research as definitive in proving that the most of the book was by King Charles.

The problem of authorship has been lately complicated by Prof. Liljegren's contention that Milton himself interpolated the Pamela prayer in some editions so that he could charge the King with having filched it from Sidney's *Arcadia*. In spite of Liljegren's close study of many editions, his conclusion as to Milton's

duplicity does not seem to me convincing. His argument rests largely on the testimony of Henry Hills, a renegade printer whose alleged statements as to *Eikon Basiliké* were quoted after his death by two physicians. Bishop Juxon did not disclaim the Pamela prayer even after the Restoration. Another prayer was copied by the King from *Practice of Piety*. Many additions were made to *Eikon Basiliké* as it went through its numerous editions. If Milton or the Roundheads had, indeed, interpolated, would the interpolation not have been something more damaging to the King's reputation than this prayer? Since the King used one prayer not his own, may he not very well have used others? Nothing could be interpolated without a fresh edition. It was the endeavor of the Roundheads rather to prevent than to increase circulation. Lord Anglesey, whose memorandum in his own copy states the book to have been composed by Gauden, wrote that when he saw the Ms. copy some of the alterations and corrections were in the King's hand. He claims that both Charles II and the Duke of York acknowledged to him Gauden's authorship. See John Toland, *Amyntor or a Defence of Milton's Life, containing a complete history of the book entitled Icon Basiliké, proving Dr. Gauden, and not King Charles I, to be the author of it: with an answer to all the facts alleged by Mr. Wagstaff to the contrary, and to the exceptions made against my Lord Anglesey*, London, 1699, pp. 82-161; *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis*, privately printed by T. Birch, 1780, vol. II, p. 557. The best defense of Milton in regard to Liljegren's charge is that of J. B. Smart in *Review of English Studies*, 1925, pp. 385-391. Liljegren takes a very unfavorable view of Milton, believing him Cæsarian and Machiavellian. This sometimes seems to influence his interpretation of facts. It may be mentioned that he is in error in regarding Thomason's Ms. dates on the pamphlets as being invariably the authentic dates of publication. See *supra*, note 5, chapter VI.

4. See the letter of Thos. Hollis to Dr. Mayhew, *Memoirs of Thos. Hollis*, vol. I, pp. 92, 93. Hollis, by his many gifts of Milton's works, did much to spread his doctrines.

5. G. P. Gooch and H. J. Laski, *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1927), p. 152; C. R. Fay, "The Political Philosophy of John Milton," *Christ's College Magazine*, Milton Tercentenary Number, Part II.

6. *I.e.*, George Rudolf Weckherlin, Court Poet of Duke Johann Friedrich of Württemberg, who employed him in important affairs of state. Influenced by Ronsard, he was a forerunner of the notable revival of German poetry in the Seventeenth Century.

7. *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum* (edited by C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait), April 24, 1648, show that a John Milton was named among ten commissions appointed to collect certain taxes in Tower Ward. If this were the poet, he was in the employ of the state before the writing of *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*. However, it is difficult to think that Milton was ever a tax collector.

CHAPTER X

1. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*, 1649, vol. I, entries for March 22, 29.

2. Hamilton, *Original Papers, etc.*, pp. 16-18.

3. This description is in *Hue and Cry*, quoted by Williams, *John Milton as a Journalist*.

4. *A Declaration of the Parliament of England*, Wrenn Library, University of Texas.

5. Thomason's date for this is May 30, 1649. His collection contains forty-two items by Godwin.

6. Needham's appearance was typical of his journalism,—hawk-nosed for news, short-sighted for its effect, thin and waspish, with earrings for sensationalism. His career is sketched in Ms. notes inserted in the Harvard files of *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, 1647-1649. See, also, Hyder Rollins, *Cavalier and Puritan* and Williams, *History of English Journalism*.

7. *Eikōnoklastes in Answer to a Book Intituled Eikōn Basiliké, the Portraiture of his Sacred Majesty in his Solitude and Sufferings. The Author, J. M.*

See Gooch and Laski, *Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*, pp. 154, 155; Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth*, pp. 175, 176.

8. Cf. note 7, chap. ix.

9. See *The Coronation Oath of King James I, edited with an Introduction and Notes by J. Wickham Legg*, London, 1902.

CHAPTER XI

1. Anthony à Wood states the royalist claim that Salmasius had no reward for his book, that at Leyden the second Charles sent Dr. Morley to the apologist with his thanks, "but not with the purse of gold, as John Milton, the impudent liar, reported." *Athenae Oxoniensis*, vol. II, p. 770.

2. In protest against the stringent press laws of this time, see the Royalist newsbook, *The Moderator*, Feb. 27-March 6, 1650.

3. *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, Jan. 22-29, 1650.

4. Williams, *History of English Journalism*, p. 247. The J. Pierpont Morgan Library has the files of *Mercurius Politicus* from the beginning, June 6, 1650, to March 22, 1655; Sept. 27, 1655, to April 12, 1660.

5. Quoted by Thomas Birch, *An Account of Milton's Life and Writings*, p. 36.

6. Hobbes' opinion of the rival books of Salmasius and Milton was:

Both are very good Latin so that I know not which is best, and both are very bad reasoning, so that I know not which is worse.

Voltaire said:

Saumaise wrote like a pedant, Milton responded like a ferocious beast.

7. Charles Symmons, *The Life of John Milton*, London, 1804, p. 338.

8. *Pro Rege et Populo Anglicano Apologia contra Johanne Polygrammatica (alias Milton Angli) Defensionem destructivam, Regis et Populi Anglicani*, Antwerp, 1651.

9. Liljegren, *Studies in Milton*, p. 88 n; Sotheby, *Ramblings in the Elucidation of the Autograph of Milton*, pp. 33-36.

10. Christopher Arnold, afterwards Professor of History at Nuremberg.

CHAPTER XII

1. *A list of the Princes, Dukes, Earls, etc., slain and taken Prisoners.*
2. This is the account of Milton's earliest biographer. Wood, also, tells of this, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, vol. II, p. 412.
3. The tit for tat of Parliament and Council is shown by the Orders in *The Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series*, 1651, vol. XV.
4. Masson, vol. IV, pp. 145, 146, 239; Hamilton, *Original Papers*, etc., pp. 52-54, 95-98; *Petition of John Milton to Commissioners for Sequestration*, Public Records Office, no. 77; Todd, *Life and Writings*, pp. 88-93. The most unfavorable opinion of Milton's part in the transaction is expressed by Sir Egerton Brydges, *Life of Milton*, p. 106.
5. It is true that he seems to invite it from the public by certain autobiographic passages in his tracts, but the feeling that he wished to stimulate by these was not a pity that would be damaging to his pride in self-sufficiency.
6. A well written pamphlet of 267 pages.
7. John Peile, "Milton and his College," *Christ's College Magazine*, Milton Tercentenary Number, part II.
8. Its true author was John Rowland.

CHAPTER XIII

1. The British Museum has Oliver Protector's warrant of Jan. 1, 1652, to Qualter Frost for payment of money to certain officials, among them Milton.
 2. In Jan., 1652, was published *The Life and Reigne of King Charles, Or the Pseudo-Martyr Discovered. With a late Reply to an Invective Remonstrance against the Parliament and present Government.*
- Although this has been attributed to Milton by the librarians of several famous collections, this would seem to be an error, since the preface contains the following statement:

I...never had any cause given me to write more or less than becomes me in sincerity, confessing that considering the distance I stood in to be a partaker of his secrets, as having been only a poor servant of his father's, until weary of the Court I retired, having seen enough of the vanity thereof, and of both reigns, though on some urgent occasions, in my addresses to him, I have had the honour of his gracious aspect.

Thomason does not ascribe this pamphlet to Milton. From internal evidence it would seem to be the work of that "Sir A. W.," who wrote *The Court and Character of King James*.

3. The complete title is *Observations upon Mr. Hobbes' Leviathan, Mr. Milton's against Salmasius and Hugo Grotius De Jure Belli et Pacis, concerning the Original of Government.*
4. *Mercurius Politicus*, March 4-11, 1652.
5. The proposal the sonnet refers to was probably *The Fifteen Fundamentals of Christianity*, which during April of 1652 caused much controversy and

occupied Cromwell's attention. Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorates*, vol. II, p. 103; *Memoirs of Thos. Hollis*, vol. II, p. 511.

6. Sir Henry Vane had been governor of Mass. in 1636 and, returning to England, became the leader of the Independents. He was at times a fanatic and at times a leader of good sense. He believed that even devils and the damned would be saved, that he himself was delegated to rule over saints on earth. After the Restoration, he was beheaded on Tower Hill, 1662.

7. Hamilton, *Original Papers*, etc., pp. 20-22. Needham was later voted £200,—twice the amount voted for Milton's *Defensio*—for translating and publishing *Mare Clausum*. See *Memoirs of Thos. Hollis*, vol. I, p. 357.

8. Phillips, *Life of Milton*.

9. Rollins, *Cavalier and Puritan*, p. 58. *The Laughing Mercury* claimed in its issue of Aug. 25-Sept. 8 that it was the only son and heir of *Democritus* and was prepared to furnish news from the Antipodes, etc.

10. *Mercurius Democritus*, July 28-Aug. 4. For Marchmont Needham, see Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, vol. III, p. 1183.

11. *Calendar of State Papers*, Domestic Series, vol. XXV, entry of Nov. 15, 1652, and vol. XXXV, entry of April 1, 1653.

12. Rollins, *Cavalier and Puritan*, p. 54.

13. Masson attributes to Milton a tract printed by F. Leach in 1653 and entitled *A Letter written to a Gentleman in the country touching the dissolution of the late Parliament*. This is not signed J. M. It is well reasoned and written in excellent English, with many balanced sentences. It excuses Cromwell and derides Parliament. A copy of this is in the Wrenn Library of the University of Texas. Although Thomason, himself, notes this as by John Milton, it is attributed in the Index of the Thomason Tracts to John Hall.

CHAPTER XIV

1. John Aubrey tells the story in this wise:

His sharp writing against Alexander Morus of Holland upon a mistake, notwithstanding he had given him by the ambassador all satisfaction to the contrary: viz. that the book called *Clarion* was writ by Peter du Moulin. Well, that was all one; he having writ it, it should go into the world; one of them was as bad as the other.

2. Rev. J. Grainger, vicar of Shiplake in Oxfordshire, *A Biographical History of England from Egbert to the Revolution*, printed for T. Davies in Russel Street, 1775, p. 60.

3. For an unfavorable criticism of the *Defensio*, see Archibald Bruce, *A Critical Account of the Life, Character and Discourses of Mr. Alexander Morus*, 1813, Section VI. The finest appreciation of the *Defensio* as a political document occurs in G. P. Gooch and H. J. Laski, *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*, pp. 206-209; see, also, Philo M. Buck, *Milton on Liberty*.

4. Marvell was the son of a clergyman. He had attended Trinity College, Cambridge, and had spent several years in foreign travel. After his return, he served as tutor to the daughter of Lord Fairfax.

5. *Alexandri Mori Ecclesiastae et Sacrarum Litterarum Professores, Fides Publica contra calumnias Johannis Miltoni*, Hague, Adrian Vlacq, 1654. The

pamphlet of 129 pages includes the letter from the Ambassador recounting his efforts to prevent publication of Milton's pamphlets, also a testimonial to the character of Morus, signed in 1648 by the clergy and senate of Geneva.

6. The best description of Milton's blindness is his own in the letter written to Philaras, who wished to interest a French physician in Milton's case.

CHAPTER XV

1. *Calendar of State Papers*, Domestic Series, vol. XCV, 1655. John Hall and Marchmont Needham, lesser scribes, were, also, deprived of their salaries.

2. See, W. C. Martyn, *Life and Times of John Milton*, American Tract Society, N. Y., 1866. Martyn quotes from Sir Samuel Morland's *History of the Evangelical Churches in the Valley of Piedmont*, 1658.

3. Hamilton, *Original Papers*, etc., says:

To Milton in a great measure was owing the success of the foreign policy of the Commonwealth, which raised England to a pitch of greatness in the councils of Europe which she had not held since the days of the Tudors.

4. News of these orders appears in the *Publick Intelligencer*, Oct. 22-29, 1655, p. 49.

5. He was not forgotten by contemporary scribes. See *A Satyr on J. M.*, British Museum, ad. Ms. 33509. Here Milton's religious beliefs are condemned. The satire concludes:

What is religion but a holy cheat
Whose outward show makes holy sinners great?

Vaughan, in 1655, wrote in a similar strain:

Most modern books are blots on Thee,
Their doctrine chaff and windy fits,
Darken'd along, as their scribes be,
With those foul storms when they were writ
While the man's zeal lays out and blinds
Only self-worship and self-ends.

In the preface to his poems, Vaughan complains that some among the principal and most learned writers of English verse strive to dash Scriptures with their impious conceits." See Louise Imogen Guiney, *Milton and Vaughan*.

In 1655 or 1656 an invective was published in Amsterdam against Milton, *Prodromus on Delirium*.

6. *Publick Intelligencer*, Dec. 31-Jan. 7, 1655-1656, p. 222; *ibid.*, Feb. 4-11, 1656, pp. 299, 300.

7. Bulstrade Whitelocke, *Memorials of the English Affairs*, p. 645.

8. This Bible is a treasured possession of the British Museum, Ad. Ms. 4244 f 52 b. A discussion of the entries cited appears in the catalogue of the additional manuscripts.

9. Bishop Hacket's *Life of Lord Keeper Williams*, though written in 1657, was not published until 1693. See Joseph Hunter, *Milton, a Sheaf of Gleanings*, London, 1743.

10. *Mercurius Politicus*, no. 356, April 9, 1657.

11. *Original Letters and Papers of State addressed to Oliver Cromwell concerning the Affairs of Great Britain from the Years 1649-1658*. Found among the political collections of Mr. John Milton. Now first published from the Originals by John Nickolls, Junior, Member of the Society of Antiquaries. London, 1743.

The letters came to Nickolls from the widow of Jos. Wyeth. Her husband had received them from Thos. Ellwood. Nickolls prefaced the Letters with a lengthy dedication to Arthur Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons.

12.

"It was a very ingenious and learned piece, and frightened Oliver exceedingly, who searched for it as Herod did in another case, but it could not be discovered whoever the author was."

Jas. Heath, *A Brief Chronicle of the late Intestine War in the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland from the year of our Lord, 1637, to this present year 1663*.

13. *Calendar of State Papers*, Domestic Series, vol. CLXXXII, Sept. 7, 1658.

CHAPTER XVI

1. The Rev. Thos. Warton edited in 1785 Milton's *Poems upon Several Occasions*. In an introductory essay he says:

The poems which compose the present volume were published almost thirty years before the appearance of *Paradise Lost*. During that interval they were so totally disregarded, at least by the general reader, as scarcely to have conferred on their author the reputation of a writer of verse.

Anthologies of poetry and miscellanies of 1655, 1657, 1658 and 1738 ignored Milton.

2. *A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes: Showing that it is not lawful for any power on earth to compel in matters of Religion*.

3. It is placed first in the list of pamphlets advertised by the *Publick Intelligencer* of April 25-May 2, 1659.

4. Geo. Kitchin, *Sir Roger L'Estrange*, London, 1913, p. 46.

5. From *A Guildhall Elegy upon the Funerals of that Infernal Saint, John Bradshaw, President of the High Court of Justice*. This is dated Nov. 9, 1659, by Thomason.

6. Kitchin, *op. cit.*, pp. 47, 48. L'Estrange was at this time editor of *The Observer*.

7. See C. H. Firth, "Anarchy and the Restoration" in *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. IV; also, Gooch and Laski, *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*; Alphonse de Lamartine, *Abélard et Héloïse*, p. 157; Peter Bayne, *The Chief Actors of the Puritan Revolution*, London, 1878, p. 332; Edward Dowden, "Milton: Civil Liberty and Ecclesiastical Liberty, Puritan and Anglican Studies in Literature"; Leslie Stephen, "New Light on Milton," *Studies of a Biographer*, London, 1902.

8. *The Character of the Rump*, dated March 17, 1659, by Thomason.

CHAPTER XVII

1. This, Secretary Thurloe told Clarendon. See Kitchin, *Sir Roger L'Estrange*, p. 47 n.

2. Thomason's date for *Be Merry and Wise* is March 13, 1659. Old Style.

3. *Plain English to his Excellency the Lord General Monk and the Officers of his Army: Or a Word in Season not only to them but to all impartial Englishmen; To which is added a Declaration of Parliament in the year 1647 setting forth the grounds and Reasons why they resolved to make no further address or application to the King.*

4. Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, vol. II, pp. 438, 439. Harrington is one of the subjects of John Aubrey's *Brief Lives*. Aubrey, himself, was a member of the Rota.

5. "Bum Sodder," *Collection of Loyal Songs*, vol. II, p. 103:

You'll find it set down in the Harrington's Moddle
Whose brains a Commonwealth doth so Coddle
That's has made a Rotation in his Noddle.
Which no body can deny.

This collection contains also the ballad, "The Rota or News from the Commonwealth Men's Club."

6. The title of this describes *Plain English* as

a Traitorous and Phanatic pamphlet, which was condemned by the Council of State, suppressed by Authority and the Printer declared against by Proclamation.

7. *Publick Intelligencer*, "Advertisement to the Reader," April 23-30, 1660.

8. *Brief Notes upon a Late Sermon*, "The Fear of God and the King, etc."

9. *No Blind Guides in Answer to a Seditious Pamphlet of Milton's entitled "Brief Notes, etc."*, Kitchin, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 57, 58, 314, 415.

10. The pamphlet, *Salmasius, his Dissection, etc.*, published at this time, expresses a like opinion in the dedication to Charles II:

For the author's profane antagonist, (John Milton, one of your Majesty's grand enemies) I shall leave him under the rod of correction, wherewith God hath evidenced his particular judgment by striking him blind.

The dedication is signed "John Garfield, Bibliophile."

11. *Physician Cure Thy Self, Or an Answer to a Seditious Pamphlet entitled "Eye Salve for the English Army, etc."*, April 23, 1660.

12. George Searle notes in this pamphlet that he has before this defended royal government against Milton's *Ready and Easy Way*.

CHAPTER XVIII

1. For an account of Milton's escape, see the biography by Toland, prefixed to *The Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*. Harvard has this in the first edition of 1698. See also the

account in Edward Phillips' biography. Both of these lives are reprinted in the *Western Reserve Bulletin* (Cleveland, 1924), with scholarly notes by Wm. H. Hulme.

2. These halting verses are signed G. S. If they are by George Searle, it is a pity that he attempted poesy.

3. *A Third Conference between O. Cromwell and Hugh Peters in St. James Park, wherein the Horrible Plot is discovered about the Barbarous Murder of our late Sovereign Lord King Charles I of Ever Blessed Memory.*

4. News of this occurs in *Mercurius Publicus*, June 20-27, 1660; see also the Privy Council's directions of June 27 to the Attorney General, Hamilton, *Original Papers*, etc., p. 58.

5. This is reprinted in *Mercurius Publicus*, Aug. 9-19, 1660, and in *The Publick Intelligencer*, Aug. 13-20, 1660. The Widener has two of the original proclamations. An error occurred in the first printing which made it appear that *The Obstructors of Justice* was written in defense of King Charles I. This was corrected in the second:

"*The Obstructors of Justice* written in defense of the traitorous sentence against his said late Majesty" is the corrected version. The change was noted in *Mercurius Publicus*, Aug. 15-22, 1660. For the burning of the books, see Neal, *History of the Puritans*, vol. II, pp. 589, 590.

6. The pamphlet is dedicated to the Duke of York and addressed to Parliament. Thomason's date is July 13, 1660.

7. *The Picture of the Good Old Cause drawn to the Life in the Effigies of Master Praise God Barebone with several examples of God's Judgments on some eminent engagers against Kingly Government.*

8. This is a long, abusive poem, fairly ingenious in the fashion of that day. Thomason's date is Aug. 17, 1660.

9. The Rev. Thos. Warton, who edited Milton's works in 1785, claimed to have the story on good authority. It was first published in Cunningham, *History of Great Britain*, vol. I. It is accepted by Milton's biographers, Todd and Ivimey.

10. Dr. Gauden wished the see of Winchester. Chancellor Hyde (later Lord Clarendon) wrote to him regarding his claim to preferment:

The particular you mention has indeed been mentioned to me as a secret; I am sorry I ever knew it; and when it ceases to be a secret, it will please none but Mr. Milton.

CHAPTER XIX

1. Wm. Hayley, an Eighteenth Century biographer of Milton, states that in 1661 the poet published a second work of Sir Walter Raleigh's, containing a series of political maxims applicable to the time. The Widener has the 1796 edition of Hayley's *Life of Milton*.

2. The story of this friendship with Milton is told in *The History of Thomas Ellwood, Written by his Own Hand*. No other could have written it so priggishly.

3. See John F. Marsh, *Papers Connected with the Affairs of John Milton and his Family from the Original Documents in his possession*, Chetham Miscel-

lanies, vol. I, 1851. The New York Public Library has the release of Anne Milton for £100 to be paid as her share of the eighth of "the said John Milton, her late father." To this is subscribed her mark, which she made between her names Anne and Milton. Mary Milton's signature to a similar release shows Milton spelled with two L's and begun with a small M. Deborah, who had married Abraham Clarke, a merchant of Dublin, was able to sign her name more correctly.

4. This incident is recorded in *The Earliest Life of Milton*, also in Anthony à Wood's *Fasti Oxoniensis*. Chas. Symmons, the biographer of 1804, reports a story told by the painter, Richardson, to the effect that Milton was offered his former position and declined it, against the urgency of his wife:

You, as other women, would ride in your coach. My aim is to live and die an honest man.

Richardson claimed to have the story from a grandson of Cromwell's, who was an intimate of Milton's. The account seems of doubtful authenticity.

5. Pamphlet by "J. T., Gent."

6. Robert South, Prebendary of Westminster and Canon of Christ's Church, *Sermons Preached upon Several Occasions*, vol. III, p. 49. The Widener has the sermon in pamphlet form, second edition, 1708.

7. Bishop Burnet, *History of My Own Times*, edited by Osmund Airy, Oxford, 1890, vol. I, pp. 283, 284.

8. Masson, vol. VI, pp. 507-511, 515, 516; S. L. Sotheby, *Ramblings in the Elucidation of the Autograph of Milton*; London, 1861, pp. 76, 77.

9. Jean Jules Jusserand, *English Essays from a French Pen*, London, 1895, p. 170.

CHAPTER XX

1. For modern interpretation of *Paradise Lost*, see E. M. W. Tillyard, *Milton*, Lincoln MacVeagh Press, 1930, part III, chaps. I-VI; Denis Saurat, *Milton, Man and Thinker*, Lincoln MacVeagh Press, 1925, pp. 213-233; Jas. Holly Hanford, *A Milton Handbook*, F. S. Crofts and Co., 1926, chap. IV; Sir Walter Raleigh, *Milton*, Ed. Arnold, 1900; Marianna Woodhull, *The Epic of Paradise Lost*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907. The bibliographies of M. Saurat and Prof. Hanford supply a plenitude of other references.

Under the editorship of F. A. Patterson, Wm. P. Trent, and others, the first two volumes have appeared of the eighteen-volume Columbia Edition of Milton. The volume containing *Paradise Lost* will be of great interest, since it will contain the variant readings of all authorized editions and hitherto unpublished material.

2. Voltaire, *Candide*, chap. XXV. This ridicule was gratefully received and seconded by Mme. du Deffand. H. A. Taine in sections on Milton in his *History of English Literature* and Edmond Scherer in *Essays on English Literature* are two other Frenchmen who deride Milton for his lack of humor. That such censure is not peculiarly French is shown by Leslie Stephen in his "New Lights on Milton," *Studies of a Biographer*, vol. IV.

3. Sir Walter Raleigh says "Hell is a Secession Parliament."

4. This opinion was expressed by Milton to Sir Robert Howard, Dryden's

brother-in-law. John Toland, *The Life of John Milton*, 1698, edited by W. H. Hulme, 1924, in *Western Reserve Bulletin*.

5. Marjorie H. Nicolson, "Milton and Hobbes," *Studies in Philology*, 1926, pp. 405-433.

6. "The Verse," published in third edition of *Paradise Lost*, 1668.

7. James Heath, *A Brief Chronicle of the Late Intestine War, etc.*, Printed by W. Lee at the Turk's-head, 1663, vol. II, p. 435.

8. This is quoted in J. J. Jusserand's *French Ambassador at the Court of Charles II*, T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1892. Several zoölogical epithets were bestowed on Milton at this time by London divines, "serpent," "canker worm," etc. Caustic references to Milton appear, also, in *Gesta Britannica*, a history of the Reigns of James I and Charles I, finished in 1664, by a cleric, who had a charge in Shoreditch. The Ms. is in the Stowe Collection of the British Museum. Dryden referred to Milton as "the blind old school-master," Masson, vol. VI, p. 636. John Evelyn, who in 1664 engaged Edward Phillips as his son's preceptor, rejoiced that, though nephew to John Milton, who wrote against Salmasius, the young man "was not at all infected by his principles, though brought up by him." *Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn*, edited by Wm. Bray, p. 262.

CHAPTER XXI

1. *Accedence Commenced Grammar*.

2. *A Brief History of Muscovia and of other less known countries lying eastward of Russia as far as Cathay. Gathered from the writings of several eye witnesses*. This was posthumously published in 1682. Masson believes it was composed between 1649 and 1652, Masson, *The Life of John Milton*, vol. VI, pp. 812, 813.

3. Edward Phillips, *Life of Milton*.

4. Preface to Echard's *Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy and Religion*.

5. *The History of Britain, that part especially now called England, from the first traditional beginning continued to the Norman Conquest. Collected from the antientest and best authors by John Milton*, Published by Jas. Allestrey, 1670.

The famous passage on contemporary affairs was published in 1681, *Mr. John Milton's Character of the Long Parliament and the Assembly of Divines*. It was used as a weapon against the Presbyterians and Non Conformists.

The best estimate of Milton's ability as an historian is that of C. H. Firth, *Milton as an Historian, Proceedings of the British Academy*, London, 1908. Firth believes that Milton did not attack bishops extensively in his history because at the time he wrote their office had been abolished. Milton used the primitive bishops as stalking horses against the Presbyterians.

6. Firth believes that Milton suppressed this voluntarily and not due to the requirement of the licenser. Edward Phillips, however, says that the passages "being thought too sharp against the clergy, could not pass the hand of the licenser."

7. This is the contention of Prof. E. M. W. Tillyard. His discussion of the poem, which he prefers above *Samson Agonistes*, is excellent in its entirety. Tillyard, *Milton*, part III, chaps. VII-X.

8. Warton in his edition of Milton's poems, 1785, says that Samson's locks

signify laws and prerogatives and that Samson represents the King whose locks were shorn by his flattering prelates.

9. Goethe has praised this drama as having "more of the antique spirit than any production of any modern poet." After reading it, he esteemed Milton as "very great."

CHAPTER XXII

1. Jonathan Richardson, the painter and friend of Pope, has recorded the description a Dorsetshire clergyman gave him of Milton at this time. According to this man, he was living in a small house, one room on a floor. Milton's room was up one pair of stairs. There, he sat in an elbow chair, "black clothes and neat enough, but not cadaverous, his hands and fingers gouty with chalk stones."

2. *The English John Milton's Fuller Treatment of the Art of Logic, adjusted to the method of Peter Ramus, to which are added an Analytic Proxis and a Life of Peter Ramus.*

3. *Poems, etc., upon Several Occasions. By Mr. John Milton: Both English and Latin, etc. Composed at several times. With a small Tractate on Education to Mr. Hartlib.*

4. The will of Sir Peter Wentworth, K. B., of Livingston Lovell, Co. Oxon. Wentworth had been an ardent Republican member of the Council of State in the second, fourth and fifth years of the Commonwealth.

5. *Hollis, Thos., The Memoirs of*, vol. I, pp. 367, 368.

6. *Of True Religion, Haeresie, Schism, Toleration, And what best may be us'd against the growth of Popery. The Author J. M.*

The names of printer and publisher do not appear on this sixteen-page pamphlet. It was printed without a license.

7. Jonathan Richardson has much to say of this in his edition of Milton's poems.

8. This circumstance is narrated by Thos. Birch in "An Account of his (Milton's) Life and Writings," prefixed to *The Works of John Milton*, London, 1753. Birch's biography of the poet first appeared in 1738.

9. John W. Good, *Studies in the Milton Tradition*, pp. 44 n.

10. From Toland's biography of 1698. Cf. "Milton," in E. de Selincourt, *English Poets and the National Ideal*, Oxford University Press, 1916.

11. Toland, *op. cit.*

12. Allen Walker Read, "The Disinterment of Milton's Remains," *Publications of Modern Language Association*, Dec., 1930.

13. Contemporary obituaries are brief: "John Milton, Died at Bunhill near Morfields in Cryplogate Parish, blind sometime before he died." This is from the necrology of Rich. Smith, Secondary of the Poultry Co. for twenty years. Sloane Ms., British Museum, Ms. 886 f 73 b. Anthony à Wood's diary entry of Nov. 19, 1674, has this mention: "In a letter from Mr. (Thos. Blount) 'tis said that . . . Milton was dead near London."

Amends are made for these in *A Complete History of Europe*, published in 1705. Milton's death is there recorded as the most memorable event of 1674.

14. Wordsworth's sonnet is the most famous of these invocations. John Morley pays eloquent tribute to Milton's influence in *Oliver Cromwell*, pp. 174,

175. John Bright admired him as one of the greatest and most political of English poets.

15. See H. Corson, *An Introduction to the Prose and Political Works of John Milton*, N. Y., 1899, *Memoirs of Thos. Hollis*, vol. I, intro. p. vii and pp. 125, 135. The best account of Milton's political influence subsequent to his death is in J. W. Good, *Studies in the Milton Tradition*, pp. 225-230. See also Edward Dowden, *Milton in the Eighteenth Century* and R. D. Havens, *Seventeenth Century Notices of Milton*.

16. Twenty-one editions of *Paradise Lost* were published in France the year before the French Revolution. Mirabeau was particularly eager in the study of Milton. See Mirabeau, *Sur la liberté de la presse, imité de l'Anglais de Milton*. This was published in Paris, 1788, 1789 and 1792. Some of Milton's prose works were much studied in Russia before the late Revolution there. A close correlation has been made between the theories of the American Declaration of Independence and Milton's *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* and the *Defensio*.

That Jefferson had Milton's Prose Works, particularly *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* and *A Defense of the English People*, before him when he wrote the Declaration of Independence is uncertain... yet the likeness to Milton's Declaration of Independence is remarkable and a comparison admirably illustrates the political genius of the great poet.

A comparison of Milton's pamphlets and the Declaration is made by means of citations in parallel columns, Alfred Waite, *A Brief Account of John Milton and his Declaration of Independence*, Gilbert G. Davis, Worcester, Mass., 1903, pp. 14, *et. seq.* It is interesting to note that Joseph Washington, son of Robert Washington of Leeds, translated *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* for the gratification of himself and a few friends. His work was published soon after his death in 1691. Good says that this shows the tenor of the beliefs of the Washington family and establishes a probable link between Milton's influence and the cause of American liberty.

17. From the copy of Elizabeth Minshull Milton's will in the New York Public Library. The mention here of Milton's coat of arms gives the last definite knowledge of the famous double headed eagle so long associated with him. It is a pity his seal with this emblem could not have been preserved in the Bodleian, where are his tortoise shell writing tablet and snuff box.

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